Nietzsche on 'What one should learn from artists'

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*Illustrations include two images from Gombrich's *The Story of Art* (1950, 8–9)

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Introduction

> *'What one should learn from artists.- How can we make things beautiful, attractive, and desirable for us when they are not? And I rather think that in themselves they never are. Here we could learn something from physicians, when for example, they dilute what is bitter, or add wine and sugar to a mixture – but even more from artists who are really continually trying to bring off such inventions and feats.' (GS 299)*

In *GS* 299, Nietzsche appears to claim that an important lesson we can learn from artists is how to distort 'things' via continual 'inventions and feats', perhaps by adding 'sweeteners' or glancing at them from a distance or sideways or through 'tinted glasses', in order to make them somehow seem better. He seems to regard this lesson as so important that we should ideally become even 'wiser' than artists themselves, so that we can use this 'subtle power' not just in art but in our lives too, transforming every detail, even the 'smallest, most everyday matters', and become 'poets of our lives'.

This idea, which pervades Nietzsche's later works, refers to the fact that he values art for its capacity to transfigure experience – as the 'great seduction' (*WP* 853, II) and 'stimulus to life' (*TI* IX, 24) – since, he suggests, it can help to alter how we interpret and value our life (Denham 2014, 189) and make it more affirmable, thereby improving our chances of life-flourishing[1].

However, in this thesis, I would like to take a closer look at what exactly Nietzsche suggests 'one should learn from artists', focussing on his later works[2]. For example, if we consider this quote superficially and in isolation, it could be argued that Nietzsche regards the role of art 'as an essentially untruthful and deceiving' activity (Janaway 2014, 48), which is reinforced by his statement that artists are concerned in devising 'inventions'. This notion is also supported by the fact that throughout his later works, there is a 'plethora of passages' in which he presents 'the role of art… as that of lying, simplifying, glorifying, selecting, rounding out, hiding and reinterpreting the ugly…' (ibid).

In addition, as Ridley suggests, the mature Nietzsche seems to value art for its ability to 'peddle "little lies"'[3] in order to make life 'bearable'[4] (Ridley 2008), which is arguably in line with the way in which he presented the role of art in his early works. For the latter helped to provide a 'veil' that 'conceals'

[1] By 'life-flourishing' or 'life-enhancing', I refer to what is 'life-promoting' (*BGE* 4) for Nietzsche. While Nietzsche does not provide a clear definition of what he means by 'life' in this context, he suggests that it shares conceptual space with other notions such as one's 'drives' (see section 2.2) and 'will-to-power' (see n.67).
[2] This includes his middle to late period, from 1878 on.
[3] Thus, these are not 'big lies' which falsify existence but 'little lies' that 'locally make a difference' (Ridley 2008).
[4] Consequently, this claim in *GS* 107 is dialled down from his earlier one that art can make life 'eternally justified' (*BT* 5).

the unpleasant things in life, thus making life-affirmation 'possible by masking its "terrifying and questionable character"' (Came 2014, 5).[5] Therefore, perhaps art still appears to stand as a form of falsification and the opposite to 'truth-telling' for the mature Nietzsche.

However, I contend that if we consider all of Nietzsche's references to artistic activity and what he suggests one can learn from it in his later works, this reading is only superficial and partial, as it omits a large part of what he values about the artistic process. Such a reading also fails to acknowledge that Nietzsche's characterisation of the role of art evolved from his early works, and needed to do so. For example, his earlier valorisation of the comforting veil of artistic 'illusion' could seemingly no longer fit so well with his doctrine of '*amor fati*' (*EH* II, 10), in which he called for the affirmation of all that is fated, even the unpleasant things in life. Consequently, this ideal seems to require one to face life *honestly* at a fundamental level, and simultaneously engage in an affirmation of its details.

In contrast to what this passage at *GS* 299 might initially suggest, I contend that, while the mature Nietzsche still values art for its 'glorifying' qualities (and this may at times involve falsification), he also suggests that *certain capable individuals* can learn from art a process of ideal, aesthetic, self-transfiguration that is not simply about sweetening or falsifying life. Instead it can provide them with an important artistic tool which may enable them to do two things: 1) access *a greater kind of understanding*[6] of themselves and their lives; and 2) make their life more affirmable. Therefore, this also improves their chances of '*amor fati*'.

To this end, I propose that, for Nietzsche, this ideal kind of aesthetic self-transfiguration represents a complex cognitive and affective process of transformation, where an ideal individual not only gains a greater understanding of certain 'necessities' of their life, but also, *from this process*, engages in a reconceptualisation of them. This reconceptualisation also has an affective dimension because it helps to re-orientate their affects in a way that celebrates their own self[7] in relation to the world. Consequently, this allows them to become more consciously aligned with their own determined characteristics, thus promoting their chances of self-formation. Therefore, in this context, aesthetic transfiguration can be regarded as more of a self-*aligner* than a sweetener.

In addition, I will argue that Nietzsche also proposes that the artistic process can provide a *particular kind* of 'higher' individual (who he directly addresses as 'artists', for example, in Preface 4, *GS*(2)) with a normative model to live by to help promote their chances of self-formation. For this artistic model suggests they should engage in a kind of 'blind' and yet purposeful, bold, skilled process over a 'lived life'. It also encapsulates the 'artistic' kind of 'self-mastery' and 'freedom' that they can hope to attain

[5] In his early work, he suggested that, ideally, we needed to catch a glimpse of Dionysian truth, i.e. of the chaotic senseless flux of life, to 'energise life', but then we could use the Apollonian 'veil' of illusion to protect ourselves and give form, coherence, and meaning to life (Ridley 2008).
[6] See section 0.2 for an outline of what this 'understanding' amounts to.
[7] I.e. one's determined traits and second nature.

via this process in the long run. So, in this way, for Nietzsche, the artistic process is linked to the 'ethical'[8] in a more fundamental way than many commentators recognise, since it offers a holistic model, or way to live, for these rare few.

As a result, we can see that Nietzsche's endorsement of these artistic processes also complements the aims of his broader philosophical project. For, unlike many others in philosophy, he did not aim to explore traditional themes such as 'truth, goodness and other fundamental matters', or 'metaphysical questions' and traditional 'a priori methods'[9] (Anderson and Cristy 2017, 1514). Instead he chose to engage in a kind of diagnostic interpretive 'psychology' (*BGE* 23), exploring fundamental questions relating to our human evaluative situation and the best 'ways to live' in light of these findings.

0.1 Outline of the thesis

To illustrate these points, I will explore a number of ways in which Nietzsche suggests certain higher individuals should adopt or learn from *specifically artistic* techniques or models – not only to gain a greater understanding of themselves and make themselves more affirmable, but also to promote their chances of greater self-formation.

- In **section 1,** I will discuss Nietzsche's account of aesthetic transfiguration. I will illustrate how he not only suggests that individuals should benefit from a kind of aesthetic self-transfiguration of their lives in order to reframe it, and make its necessary qualities affirmable,[10] (which he suggests tragedy is able to do *for* a 'spectator'), but I will also show how he proposes that a certain kind of 'higher' individual – with an *artistic* disposition, skill, and courageous tragic attitude – is, in some sense, able to become an *active* participant in this process. Consequently, these 'artistic' higher individuals can use aesthetic transfiguration as a kind of epistemic empirical tool to come to know and affirm 'who [they] are' (*TI* IX, 7). This is because, after viewing their life as an 'aesthetic phenomenon' (*GS* 107) under the influence of aesthetic entrancement, they are able to reflect on it *as a 'whole'* from an artistic distance, unclouded by their everyday concerns, and 'force out' its necessities (*TI* IX 7, 8, 9). From this new perspective, they can transfigure their experience of life around these details, via a kind of reconceptualisation with an affective dimension, because it helps them to re-orientate their affects in a way that celebrates their own characteristics in relation to the world.

[8] In Nietzsche's philosophy, ethics relates to what is the best life and means (i.e. virtues, values, and practices) for attaining greater life-enhancement.
[9] Pippin 2010.
[10] This includes even the unpleasant ones.

- In **section 2,** following on from the idea that aesthetic transfiguration, for Nietzsche's rare capable few, can be used as a kind of cognitive and affective transformative tool to promote self-alignment, I will show how this kind of alignment can also potentially be assisted, according to Nietzsche, by another form of *artistic* process: a kind of 'self-cultivation' over a 'lived life' where an individual engages in an *artistic* exploration of their life. For example, I will highlight how Nietzsche recommends that his ideal individuals explore life by freely embracing the multilayered way in which we actually interact with the world, for example, via 'reason, sensibility, feeling, will' (*TI* IX, 49) – all of which are interconnected and infused with 'evaluations'. Doing so enables such individuals to explore a variety of multilayered 'perspectives', and gain greater depth of 'knowledge' of their lives, as supported by Nietzsche's multiple perspectives claim (see section 2.2).

  Thus, this process is similar to aesthetic transfiguration insofar as it suggests that in order for one to attain new perspectives and revaluations, this cannot be done by 'reason or education' alone (Anderson and Cristy 2017, 1532), but rather as part of a process that combines investigation with an artistic sensibility. Moreover, as this kind of exploration draws on how we respond to our lives on *all* levels as a wholly embodied organism (that is, not solely via conscious conceptual thought), it goes hand-in-hand with self-formation *if* it is successful. This is because, as the individual embraces more perspectives, they can activate their own underlying drives, which will ideally, in time, develop and help them to 'discipline … [themselves] to wholeness' (*TI* IX, 49).

- In **section 3,** I will also show that Nietzsche indicates that his fellow 'higher' types of individuals, 'as artists', should appreciate the importance of 'not knowing' at certain times. For, in a similar way to artists, *too much* self-reflection can potentially stifle the development of their underlying processes and hold them back from fulfilling their potential.

- Finally, in **section 4**, I will piece together elements from the previous sections to highlight what Nietzsche suggests that higher 'artistic' 'individuals should learn from the artistic model as a whole. This, I propose, illustrates what he regards as an ideal 'way to live' based on two important *active* and *passive* elements: namely, 'cheerfulness' and 'not knowing'. I will also contend that, when considered as a whole, it is strikingly similar to an artistic process in that his ideal individuals should, in some sense, 'engage' with their process of 'becoming' by following a process that is 'blind' (e.g. trial-and-error and not primarily driven by consciousness) yet goal-oriented (e.g. agential, lawful).

0.2 Relation to other commentators' arguments

I will begin by exploring arguments put forward by other commentators (e.g. Denham, Janaway, Ridley, and Reginster) to demonstrate that Nietzsche adopts a more nuanced approach than the straightforward falsification thesis because he suggests that, sometimes, artistic approaches for some individuals can be associated with drawing out a kind of greater self-understanding. As the discussion progresses, however, I will develop their claims further.

For example, in the first section, I will assess the plausibility of the idea that someone can achieve greater understanding about themselves via aesthetic transfiguration in light of Nietzsche's claims about the epiphenomenal nature of consciousness.[11] I propose that this notion can be supported if we consider his use of another empirical tool: genealogy. In my view, genealogy is similar to aesthetic transfiguration in that, according to his account, it enables one to reveal certain self-truths by 'looking away from ourselves' (Katsafanas 2015, 2), and attaining a wider perspective, as opposed to via a direct form of self-reflection.

As the discussion progresses, I will also diverge from others' readings by identifying two distinctive yet crucial features in Nietzsche's account which other commentators have largely neglected.

Firstly, I contend that Nietzsche postulates that art or artistic practice *narrowly construed* (i.e. in relation to the work of artists in the 'ordinary' sense, such as his ideal writers and musicians) can provide a kind of prototypical, normative model for life (which, in turn, informs on some of his broader notions such as form-giving and life-affirmation). This is because, when done well (as exemplified, for example, by the artists he discusses in *'Where I admire'* in *CW*), artistic practice can provide an ideal model for Nietzsche's fellow higher 'artistic' individuals to live by and, to a minimal extent, 'engage' in aesthetic self-transfiguration. For they can do this via an alternative ideal model for activity, which is a 'blind' yet purposeful *artistic* process (e.g. see section 4).

Thus, while Nietzsche often values 'art' and those who 'glorify' life in a broad sense, such as in the context of 'form creation' (which can include people who are not normally associated with 'art' in the 'ordinary' sense, such as state creators (*GM* II, 17)), it seems, in the cases that I will be discussing, he is suggesting that certain individuals can learn something from artistic practice *specifically in the narrow sense.* And this enables them, in some way, to apply artistic models to their lives or utilise them in certain endeavours, such as in the study of philosophy and self-development. Thus, this suggests that *artistic* practice, narrowly construed, offers something unique.

Secondly, I contend that while other commentators discuss certain parts of Nietzsche's notion of aesthetic self-transfiguration separately, none of them present them in the way Nietzsche does,[12] that is,

[11] E.g. *TI, The Four Great Errors*,3; D 109, 116, 119, 129.
[12] E.g. *Contra Wagner.*

as part of a *holistic* 'artistic' process for his elite ingroup. As a result, by not presenting them as part of this wider process, such readings fail to illuminate the nature of these features fully. I suggest that we can only understand the individual aspects of Nietzsche's theory if we see them as interdependent.

To highlight this, I will give three examples:

1: Nietzsche's ideal kind of greater self-understanding and affirmation

For example, I suggest we can see this when Denham links the aesthetic self-transfigurative process with Nietzsche's other suggestion that we should 'survey' our qualities (*GS* 290) and 'master our passions in their given, natural forms' (2014, 190-192)**,** without sufficiently clarifying how this could occur. And, on its own, this idea raises questions. For example, if we consider Nietzsche's claims about our cognitive limitations and the epiphenomality of most conscious thought (see section 1.4), it seems unlikely that, in his view, an individual could somehow: firstly, become consciously *aware* of the nature of their determined traits to 'survey' them, and, secondly, 'master' or '*cultivate'* them in a direct sense, in the way a gardener tends to his plants. As such, it is unclear how this kind of process could work.

However, I contend, if we realise that this process is based on both of these features, i.e. the **artistic model (in the narrow sense)** and this kind of **structural holism,** then we can intuitively understand what this process amounts to and resolve these tensions.

For, in doing so, I suggest,

- with regards to self-'awareness', we can appreciate that the greater self-'understanding' which an ideal 'artistic' individual achieves and affirms in this process does not amount to a direct conscious or cognitive awareness of 'necessities' of one's life (or any kind of 'truth' in a 'realist' sense), which would be problematic; instead it is based on 'artistic' interpretations drawn from a kind of wholly-embodied 'artistic' exploration of one's life – combining 'reason, sensibility, feeling, will' (*TI* IX, 49) (see section 2). Therefore, this understanding remains artistic, partial, perspectival, simplified,[13] 'glorified' (*TI* IX, 24), and *selective*, and can be regarded as 'erroneous' in this way.[14] Thus, this does not conflict with the fact that, as Schuringa notes (2013, 285), Nietzsche repudiates the idea that we can make any 'metaphysical commitments or suppositions about the relationship between the mind and world of the kind involved in traditional epistemology' and therefore postulate any 'realist' kinds of 'truths' relating to a 'consciousness-independent', structured, cognisable, world (ibid, 284). Yet, this does not rule out the possibility that, for Nietzsche's ideal types, these 'artistic' interpretations can be insightful and, in some way, 'appropriate' following effective, empirical investigation. For Nietzsche suggests that these individuals have a special kind of artistic strength,

[13] For example, as 'thinkers' we 'make things simpler than they are' (*GS* 189).
[14] See Stern 2013, 155.

constitution, and skill. This makes them capable of utilising the perspective-shifting powers of artistic distance and 'Rausch' and, by attaining a new, wider perspective, they can draw out and affirm salient features of their experiences which they could not see before, and deepen their understanding, in accordance with his multiple-perspectives claim (see sections 1.4 and 2.2).[15]

- Consequently, with regards to self-'cultivation', we can also see how this process could potentially help to promote their self-'growth' and self-'mastery'. Because, while their artistic interpretations may not amount to a *direct* conscious, cognitive awareness or cultivation of self-'truths', at the same time, if it represents greater self-insight or awareness into the nature of their experiences (and simultaneously promotes a new life-affirming response), it seems that this could plausibly help to transfigure an individual's framework of experience and re-orientate their affects in a manner that is more complementary to their 'true' self, thus providing an indirect, better aligned motivational weight (see section 1.3).

2: Proactive, artistic exploration of one's life

To give another example, I argue that we can only fully understand *how* Nietzsche suggests that the ideal 'artistic' individual engages in life in a more proactive, affirmative way (when one, for example, responds to life's challenges with enthusiasm) by developing Reginster's claims further (2014) and by considering that this process has an artistic basis. For, in my view, the *full* artistic model naturally leads us to realise that:

- the ideal 'artistic' individual is incited to engage with their experiences *more*, not as a conscious 'helmsman', but as a kind of 'artist' where they embrace a wholly-embodied *artistic* exploration of life as honestly as possible. Thus, they also explore their life by bravely recognising and embracing the multi-layered, perspectival way in which we actually interact with the world (see section 2). (Therefore, also facing life honestly in this respect).

- Furthermore, like an artist, they realise that by affirmatively exploring one's experiences in life (even 'pain') in this way with hard work, discipline, and passion, it can also provide them with '*stimulus*' (*TI* X, 5). And this will open up new perspectives (see sections 2.2–2.3.1), and help to promote their self-development.

This idea also serves to establish why the artistic model is primary for Nietzsche. Because, as well as being a wholly-embodied process, reflecting how we actually interact with the world, it also, unlike other models (which may offer something fixed, permanent, and wholesale) represents something that

[15] While this may have interesting implications for the practice of philosophy, I will not have the space to discuss this here.

is always uncertain, ever-changing, boundary-pushing and *distinct* to an individual, as it is linked to their *own* path towards greater self-formation.

3: An alternative artistic model of activity

As a final example, Ridley's account (2007b) effectively illuminates how Nietzschean self-autonomy may be experienced, when an individual's inner 'laws' are revealed to them in their actions as 'exemplary' in a kind of *passive* way. However, I contend, this reading alone does not sufficiently reflect how Nietzsche's account suggests that ideal individuals can somehow in a minimal sense *actively* 'participate' in this process, as exemplified by artists (in the narrow sense), who engage in a kind of 'blind' yet purposeful artistic process (see section 4). For example, while individuals like Nietzsche and Goethe cannot consciously know the path they will take, it seems that, within the process, they still need to *wrestle* with inner conflict and engage in an artistic process of trial-and-error, and draw on some kind of strength and self-insight to 'keep' themselves 'in check' (see section 2.5).

My aim, therefore, is to provide this kind of holistic account (which is lacking in the existing literature), which unites these elements in a cumulative way over the course of this thesis.

Section 1 Artistic transfiguration as a tool for self-alignment

In contrast to what a superficial reading of *GS* 299 might suggest, I want to highlight that Nietzsche's account of self-transfiguration cannot always represent a straightforward creative form of falsification or illusion. Rather, for an ideal few, it can refer to a complex cognitive and affective transformation process which has important connections to attaining greater self-understanding (because, for them, it simultaneously promotes greater self-alignment and self-affirmation).

1.1 Art, 'truth-seeking' and life-affirmation

It is necessary to begin by providing a brief outline of the mature Nietzsche's approach to art and its relation to 'truth-seeking' and life-affirmation for different kinds of people. For to begin with, we can see that it is unlikely that Nietzsche simply valued art for its ability to 'falsify' in his later works. We need only to consider that, in the *Gay Science*, while he is particularly interested in learning from the 'activities of artists' about how to adopt 'creative attitudes towards oneself' (Janaway 2014, 50), at the same time he does not want an ideal individual simply to abandon any relation with 'truth'. This is because, in his view, there is still a tension between the act of creativity and 'intellectual conscience',[16] which insists on 'honesty' (Ridley 2007a, 82) and therefore 'truthfulness'.

Moreover, in his later works, Nietzsche called on 'higher' individuals to affirm *all* that is fated in their life, even unpleasant details, with his doctrine of '*amor fati*', in light of which it seems unlikely that he would also advocate them to simply falsify life with art in this way.[17] Consequently, Ridley (2007a, 82f) has suggested that, in his later works, Nietzsche's ideal man needs to recognise the 'true' nature of his character and life as much as possible before he cultivates the 'false' to the minimum degree that his 'intellectual conscience' (e.g. *GS* 2) thinks is necessary – that is, whatever minimum level is necessary to ward off 'nausea and suicide' (*GS* 107).

Thus, Ridley comments: 'The creative spirit envisaged in the *Gay Science* is… one who first faces the truth as honestly as possible; second tries to see as beautiful as much as possible of "what is necessary in things" (*GS* 276) and then finally falsifies those conditions that defeat this attempt' (ibid). Consequently, it seems in this context that he only advocates any artificial styling if it becomes necessary when 'truths' may become detrimental to a person's life-affirmation.

One could argue that this kind of process is reflected in the following quote:

[16] E.g. *GS* 319,344,284.
[17] See Reginster 2014,23 on Nietzsche's growing misgivings about the ability of 'illusion' to 'underwrite a genuine affirmation'.

> *'a great and rare art! It is practised by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses that their nature has to offer and then fit them into an artistic plan until each appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a great mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of first nature removed - both times through long practice and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it is reinterpreted into sublimity. Much that is vague and resisted shaping has been saved and employed for distant views - it is supposed to beckon towards the remote and immense. In the end, when the work is complete, it becomes clear how it was the force of a single taste that ruled and shaped everything great and small… one thing is needful: that a human being should attain satisfaction with himself - be it through this or that poetry or art.' (GS(2) 290)*

This highlights that, in Nietzsche's view, this process is not a completely artificial act of creation, but instead is based on surveying 'truths' about oneself before one 'fits' them into an 'artistic plan', for it 'demands both truthfulness (knowing one's strengths and weaknesses) and falsification/stylisation (creating a work of art out of the whole)' (May 1999,34).

It also illustrates that the crucial point of devising this 'artistic plan' is that it enables one to form a self with which one is satisfied, and therefore one that can be unreservedly self-affirmed.

This account therefore proposes that Nietzsche values the ability to devise an artistic plan based on truth, not because it shields an individual from the 'truth', but because it affords a method which enables someone to remain *as truthful about life as they possibly can* (while still being life-affirming).

Thus, Janaway (2014, 50–51) comments that, for Nietzsche: '[a]rt's falsifications are no self-subsistent exercise in escaping from truth but rather an employment of illusion in the service of intellectual conscience, with its project of confronting the truth – a change of tactic when all other means take us to the limit of what we can bear'.

This point could also relate to the fact that Nietzsche suggests that the level of 'truth' that an individual can bear is somehow proportionate to their strength of character. For example, he proposes that his ideal character can take on more 'truth' (and perhaps even become 'sick', before becoming stronger through the recovery process). The 'strength of a spirit' would be proportionate to 'how much of the "truth" he could withstand – or, to put it more clearly, to what extent he needs it to be thinned out, veiled over, sweetened up, dumbed down, and lied about (*BGE* 39)' (Janaway 2007, 264). By contrast, most humans need to be protected from too much 'truth' for their own self-preservation.

Nietzsche also suggests that stronger characters can face up to greater 'truths' about their character and life, whereas 'weak characters without power over themselves' are not; and they are '"well advised" to cultivate a taste for the "wild, arbitrary, fantastic, disorderly, and surprising," precisely because "it is only in this way that they can give pleasure to themselves" (*GS* 290)' (Anderson and Cristy 2017, 1535).

This passage emphasises that not only does everyone have their own unique, determined set of psychological traits (which may constrain what kind of form or style can be imposed), but also one has to consider how one's own 'taste' will respond and what one will find pleasing (Ridley 2007b, 210–11).

However, setting these issues aside, from this one could propose that Nietzsche advocates different levels of 'truth' and artificial styling, depending on the 'type' of individual, and their context, and what is best for their 'life-enhancement'. At the same time, it would be incorrect to portray Nietzsche as comfortably settled with the balance between truth-telling and 'producing illusions' when necessary (Janaway 2014, 51),[18] as he seemed to express varying views about how truthfulness should fit in with life-affirmation. For example, on the one hand, he said that the 'falseness of a judgement is itself' not an objection; 'the question is how far the judgement promotes and preserves life' (*BGE* 4), which perhaps suggests that truthfulness is less of a consideration. However, on the other hand, he valorises a kind of brave free spirit who is able to confront and 'will' all the details of their life 'again and again':

> *'the ideal of the most high-spirited, vital, world-affirming individual, who has learned not just to accept and go along with what was and is, but who wants it again and again just as it was and is through all eternity.' (BGE 56)*

As such, it seems unclear whether greater life-affirmation should be reached via falsification or by bravely confronting oneself truthfully.

The waters may be muddied further when we consider Nietzsche's general approach to truth-seeking. For he had reservations about its value (*BGE* 1) and clearly repudiated unconditional truth-seeking, on account of its potentially life-denying consequences.[19] However, at the same time, he also recognised his own 'commitment to truthfulness', which was an important driver behind his genealogical work (Janaway 2014, 51).

However, I contend that all of these tensions point to the fact that Nietzsche had a far more nuanced account of art and its relation to truthfulness and life-affirmation. Consequently, a reading of Nietzsche's account which *only* presents art as a kind of 'falsifier' for those who need it for greater life-affirmation is misleading. This is because, in Nietzsche's view, art can play various roles for different people and for different levels of life-enhancement.

Nietzsche suggests that 'weaker' kinds of individuals (who, in fact, constitute the majority of people) are likely to need more falsifications and art can therefore help them in this respect, where 'honesty

[18] Nietzsche comments: 'About the relation of art to truth, I became serious at the earliest time: and even now I stand before this dichotomy with a holy terror' (*KSA* 13,550).
[19] For he suggests that our 'divine' worship of truth is life-denying, and science is a manifestation of the ascetic ideal (Janaway 2014,51f).

would lead to nausea and suicide' (*GS* 107). However, this is *not* to say that art itself necessarily always falsifies (Ridley 2013, 9).

Additionally, on a separate point, this is not to say that Nietzsche's 'stronger' types, who can handle greater levels of 'truth', do not need art either. Indeed, as I will argue, in the context of these 'stronger' types, Nietzsche suggests that art can help them embrace *more 'truths'* about themselves and their lives, not by sugar-coating them, but instead by doing something more fundamental. This is because, as I have suggested, it helps them to generate their own kind of cognitive and affective transformation, which enables them to reconceptualise how they view their lives, so that they can re-orientate their affects in a way that is more life-affirming, and celebrates *their* life in the context of the world. Thus, in this context, art acts not as a 'sweetener' or 'falsifier' but as a self-*aligner* because it helps *present self-'truth'* in a way that actively *promotes* one's self-development in relation to the world. Therefore, in this context, art and 'truthfulness' come closer together as important forces, working in parallel and helping 'higher' individuals to embrace Nietzsche's goal of *amor fati*.

(NB. However, as outlined in section 0.2, this has no relation to the embracement of any 'realist' kind of 'truths'; rather, it is an ideal process which involves one facing one's life *honestly* and developing *a certain kind* of greater understanding.)

1.2 Artistic distance and transfiguration

To support the claim that in Nietzsche's later works, art no longer has its earlier, primary role of 'veiling' or falsifying the unpleasant aspects of life to make it affirmable, I will now consider his later view that art can provide us with the ability to 'transfigure' the framework of our experience so that we can revaluate life and affirm it wholeheartedly (Denham 2014, 189).

But how can art have this transformative power? One might think that one could transform one's outlook and alter one's evaluations of life if one were to view it more through the lens of aesthetic-type values, e.g. according to standards of 'beauty, originality, authenticity' (Denham 2014, 170–71). However, as I have already mentioned, Nietzsche was particularly interested in a more fundamental kind of aesthetic transfiguration. This was based on a complex psychological process, when aesthetic experience somehow promotes a kind of reconceptualisation of one's life with an affective dimension, because it helps an individual to re-orientate their affects in a way that celebrates thems*elves* in relation to the world.

1.2.1 Transfiguration for a 'spectator'

We can begin to appreciate how Nietzsche envisaged this psychological and cognitive shift to occur (via the experience of aesthetic transfiguration) if we consider his references to aesthetic experience and his account of what happens when, *as a spectator*, in an aesthetic experience we are completely entranced, for example, by a captivating piece of artwork.[20] (Later I will also consider how certain individuals, in Nietzsche's view, may also move beyond the more passive role of a 'spectator' and engage in this process in a more active sense as 'artists'.)

It seems that, for Nietzsche, there are two key elements or mechanisms that occur in a completely engaged kind of aesthetic experience, which can lead to aesthetic transfiguration:

- Firstly, 'attunement', which can also be thought of as entrancement, intoxication, or 'Rausch' (Denham 2014, 172f);
- Secondly, self-transcendent interest (ibid, 181f).

As I will illustrate, Denham proposes that, for the mature Nietzsche, the first element of 'entrancement' seems to generate a second state of self-transcendent interest, which is not dispassionate or free from interest, since one is intensely captivated by the 'artwork'. Yet, it is 'disinterested' and 'self-transcendent' in the sense that one is 'lifted out' of one's own 'everyday' concerns, having become immersed in the aesthetic experience. This state is then potentially capable of promoting a new perspective for the individual which, ideally, is life-affirming. (In fact, Denham describes the second state as '*disinterested* self-transcendence' because one becomes self-'disinterested' insofar as one transcends an 'egocentric' kind of 'willing' (ibid, 179) related to the 'fulfilment of individual… aims and desires' (ibid, 176). However, I suggest that Denham's term is misleading as the 'intoxicated' state *as a whole* is far from 'disinterested' for Nietzsche. Therefore, I feel it is more suitable to reclassify her term as 'self-transcendent *interest*'.)

I will sketch out this process step by step. Firstly, in 'entrancement' a person becomes captivated by an artwork because they undergo an 'intense, impassioned and cognitively captivating' aesthetic experience (Denham 2014, 172). The mature Nietzsche regularly refers to this kind of completely-engaged cognitively and affectively captivated experience as 'Rausch'. However, he uses this term in several different contexts. For example, it seems to cover the 'rapture' or 'joyous' states one experiences in relation to beautiful works of art, to intense aesthetic experiences in response to the more 'difficult', perhaps harrowing, artworks of *Antigone* or *Hamlet*, to spiritual enlightened 'rapture' in response to

[20] In this context, Nietzsche is only interested in a 'proper' 'fully attentive' and 'wholly involved' aesthetic experience, and disregards less-engaged versions (Denham 2014,171).

certain uplifting music, to other states of 'intoxication' and 'frenzy' which may imply a loss of self-conscious agency (ibid, 173).

However, while aesthetic experience may cover these different kinds of states, there is something that all his uses of 'Rausch' have in common. Namely, the idea that we are completely entranced by the target of our attention and thus 'overpowered by something affecting all levels of thought, feeling and perception' (ibid, 173), and as such 'one's consciousness is fully attuned to the experiential target such that both the content and character of one's experience are determined by it' (ibid, 174). As a result, as Denham notes, the 'subject ceases to be aware of himself as distinct from object' (ibid, 175).

Thus, it seems, because a subject is overpowered on all levels (e.g. cognitively and affectively), their reflective capacities collapse and they engage in a kind of complete absorption in the moment. As Denham notes: 'he is transported out of himself and his merely personal sphere of concerns and ambitions by the allure and intrigue of the world he inhabits', 'whether he will it or no' (ibid, 180). It seems then in this moment of aesthetic engagement there is a loss of self-conscious agency because he is 'at the mercy of experiences delivered to him' (ibid, 174).

This kind of account of the aesthetic process has been observed elsewhere (e.g. Stolnitz 1989, 25). Iris Murdoch (1970, 82) has provided a more recent account of this phenomenon which she calls an 'occasion for "unselfing"':

> *'We are anxiety-ridden animals. Our minds are continually active, fabricating an anxious, usually self-preoccupied, often falsifying veil which partially conceals our world...the most obvious thing in our surroundings which is an occasion for 'unselfing'... is what is popularly called beauty...I am looking out of my window in an anxious and resentful state of mind...Then suddenly I observe a hovering kestrel. In a moment everything is altered. The brooding self with its hurt vanity has disappeared. There is nothing now but kestrel.'*

In this way, Denham (2014, 186) suggests that, for Nietzsche, the aesthetically-motivated Rausch can be defined as a kind of 'disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of' an object 'for its sake alone'. For, when an individual fully attunes with a target in a state of Rausch, they become 'immersed in them to such an extent that the content of [their] consciousness can only be identified in relation to them' (ibid, 190). This leads them to become unclouded by their 'standard, habitual, (and largely instrumental) evaluative attitudes', and instead they can enjoy and observe the 'objects independently of their everyday utility'.

Consequently, Nietzsche indicates that this state provides them with a useful tool because, after they have experienced this kind of 'self-disinterested' perspective, they can reflect on it and learn something from it. For, crucially, Nietzsche seems to imply that an individual can utilise this kind of entranced state by viewing their *own* lives as an 'aesthetic phenomenon' (*GS* 107). Once they have experienced

this kind of immersion in the spectacle of their life 'for its sake alone', they can reflect on this experience, and gain a greater kind of 'epistemic' standing. This is because it enables them, on later reflection, to consider their life from a new perspective *as it is*, i.e. as a *whole*, and attain a kind of 'artistic distance' 'from themselves', to some extent released from the influence of their everyday concerns. (This is not to say that one denies one's feelings or everyday experiences; one is just simultaneously able to see them for what they are, as part of a bigger picture.) Nietzsche describes this as:

> *'the art of 'putting oneself on stage' before oneself. Only thus can we get over certain lowly details in ourselves. Without this art we would be nothing but foreground, and would live entirely under the spell of that perspective which makes the nearest and most vulgar appear tremendously big and as reality itself.' (GS(2) 78)*

Thus, this kind of completely-engaged aesthetic experience, which essentially captivates one's cognitive and affective processes, provides an important empirical tool for noticing things that one could not before. As Young (1992, 124) notes: 'in the aesthetic state [the] normal categories of experience are suspended, thereby enabling us to become alive to usually unnoticed aspects and construals of objects: in Nietzschean language, the object undergoes "transfiguration"'.

As part of this, Nietzsche suggests that this transfigurative process is also potentially able to promote a new, positive re-evaluation. Not only because it enables us to suspend our 'standard, habitual, (and largely instrumental) evaluative attitudes', but also because, when viewed in this new artistic light, the 'necessary or essential or defining features' of an object are illuminated and given more significance and 'intensity', making them '*interesting in themselves*' (Denham 2014, 190). And Nietzsche indicates that we also do this in a 'way that excites our imaginations, emotions and other psychological responses' (ibid).

Thus, this process not only allows us to notice new things, on account of our holistic outlook and an unwaveringly 'interested' attitude (which makes it more effective), but also, *potentially*, there is an intrinsic element of positive revaluation already embedded *within the act* of viewing something as an 'aesthetic phenomenon'. This potential derives from the fact that in viewing something aesthetically, one adopts a proactive stance, with a willingness to embrace and view everything. One does not shy away from anything, as if held back by discriminatory or negative feelings like fear, discomfort or thoughts of utility. Instead everything becomes 'interesting' and excites our imagination. This kind of outlook could also be paralleled with the 'healthy' kind of attitude represented in Nietzsche's ideal 'free spirit', who also refuses to flinch and turn away from the details of their life, but embraces a courageous, 'audacious engagement' with reality (May 1999, 180).

As an aside, Denham observes that the idea that art can create a kind of artistic distance between the spectator and their target of attention is also present in Nietzsche's earlier characterisation of the

function of art with reference to tragedy. For example, we can see this in *BT* where Nietzsche suggests that, via the 'Apollonian realm of illusions' (Denham 2014, 183), Greek tragedies were able to allow an individual to self-transcend so that they could then view their own individual misfortunes from a 'safe distance', not as particulars for whom 'the tragic dimensions of life can only be feared and condemned' (ibid, 193), but rather as 'aesthetically transformed into universals' which one can 'glorify' (ibid, 192). Thus, a spectator could simultaneously transcend themselves and yet still fully engage and 'live and suffer' with the tragedies 'with intensity and passion' (ibid, 184).

However, in Nietzsche's earlier work, art had a fundamentally different role in that it aimed to shield its spectators from 'terrible' reality, rather than let them embrace the 'wilder emotions' and the experience of the Dionysian Rausch (ibid, 184).[21] For, in Nietzsche's earlier accounts, the spectator was always 'mindful of the fact that even the most captivating work of art is an illusion, "mere appearance" (*BT* 7)'[22] (ibid, 183). Therefore, the spectator 'remains at a remove from the spectacle it presents, engaging with the universals of the work on one level, while on another never forgetting that it is a fiction' (ibid).[23]

Whereas, in Nietzsche's later works, the aesthetically-motivated Rausch, by initially rendering an individual in a self-transcendent entranced state, subsequently affords them with a different kind of artistic 'distance'. This then allows them to reframe their experience of existence, from which they can affirm even the most terrible things in their life, as illustrated in the following passage:

> *'The psychology of the orgiastic, as an overflowing feeling of life and strength where even pain acts as a stimulus, gave me the key to the concept of tragic feeling, a concept that had been misunderstood by Aristotle and even more by our pessimists. Tragedy is so far from proving anything about Hellenic pessimism in Schopenhauer's sense of the term that in fact it serves as the decisive refutation and counter-example to Schopenhauerian pessimism. Saying yes to life, even in its strangest and harshest problems; the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the sacrifice of its highest types - that is what I called Dionysian, that is the bridge I found to the psychology of the tragic poet. Not to escape horror and pity, not to cleanse yourself of a dangerous affect by violent discharge - as Aristotle thought -: but rather, over and above all horror and pity, so that you yourself may be the eternal joy in becoming, - the joy that includes even the eternal joy in negating...' (TI X, 5)*

This kind of artistic transfiguration can therefore enable one *simultaneously to transcend* one's 'ordinary' perspective and *still immerse* oneself and engage in one's own sufferings, including even the 'terror and destruction that marks human experience' (Denham 2014, 192–93) as one becomes part of

[21] Although Nietzsche endorses a kind of Dionysian Rausch at the end of *BT* (Denham 2014,184).
[22] They also regarded it as entertainment for divine spectators (Ridley 2013,3).
[23] See *BT*7.

the ‘drama of great existence’. Even ‘pain still has the effect of a stimulus’ and can become part of what is ‘beautiful’ in life (ibid).

So, artistic transfiguration not only has the capacity to transfigure the most terrible of things, but also has a transfigurative effect on the psychology of the subject (i.e. the ‘orgiastic’ individual), so that they *themselves* become ‘the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity’. Thus, Denham (2014, 193f) notes that these two kinds of transfiguration represent a conjunction of both psychological ‘union’ with, and transcendence of, ‘terror and pity’:

- where the ‘transcendence’ does not equate to an ‘elimination’ of one’s responses to these things but instead represents a shift of perspective on them, away from one’s individual ‘ordinary’ ‘aims and purposes’ (ibid),

- and where ‘union’ means the aesthetically-transfigured agent becomes ‘unified with that which produces or manifests terror and destruction’ because he identifies himself as ‘a manifestation of the eternal cycle of birth, becoming, and destruction’ (ibid 194).

However, crucially, in Nietzsche’s view, this kind of aesthetic transfiguration, which is able to transform some of the most terrible and ‘hardest problems’ (*TI* X, 5), cannot be achieved by *all* art. It can only be reached through work that is life-affirming. And he identifies ‘tragedy’ in particular as having found the key to ‘saying yes to life’.[24]

1.2.2 Active participant in aesthetic transfiguration

Having outlined how, for Nietzsche, this kind of aesthetic experience can have a certain cognitive and psychological transformative effect on an individual as a ‘spectator’, I would now like to consider the fact that he also indicates that certain individuals are in fact capable of engaging in this kind of transfigurative process themselves, as an ‘artist’ of their lives, drawing on the power of Rausch and the artistic ‘distance’ that follows.[25]

This idea is hinted at in *GS* 290 where Nietzsche proposes that people should engage in some kind of self-fashioning, by fitting their ‘strengths and weaknesses’ into ‘an artistic plan’. For, this process seems to require an individual to adopt an ‘artistic’ distance, because they need to stand back and ‘survey’ themselves. Furthermore, Nietzsche suggests this kind of self-transformation can enable one to ‘take’ the ‘terrible character’ away from some of one’s ‘passions’ (*HH* Wanderer, 83). Elsewhere, he also

[24] See *TI* III,6, *TI*, IX,24.
[25] Denham (2014,180) notes how Rausch in a spectator is a ‘diminished version’ of that found in a creative artist.

reinforces the idea that it is possible for one, in some way, to stand back and view oneself in this way when he suggests that: 'at times we need to have a rest from ourselves by looking at and down at ourselves and from an artistic distance, laughing at… ourselves or crying at ourselves' (*GS* 107).

However, Nietzsche also states that only certain individuals can do this. These are a kind of 'higher' type who are 'artists', who have 'eyes' and 'ears' 'to see and hear' 'what each man is himself', details which can then be transfigured:

> *'Only artists,...,have given men eyes and ears to see and hear with some pleasure what each himself is, himself experiences, himself wants; only they have taught us to value the hero that is bidden in each of these everyday characters and taught the art of regarding oneself as a hero, from a distance and as it were simplified and transfigured.'(GS(2) 78)*

Thus, this kind of 'higher' individual, who can view life from a distance, can become 'one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*:…' (*GS(2)* 276).[26]

Ridley (2013, 16–17) supports this idea, noting that Nietzsche attributes an artist's 'godlike' disposition (*GM* II,7) to the fact that 'like the gods, [he] is not only a keen observer of human living', and 'in a sense, an author of it', but also, unlike the other 'actors in the spectacle' of life, he is able to have 'a self-relation *defined by distance*'. This is also the ideal kind of distance which Nietzsche observes has perhaps yet to be sufficiently achieved so that one can 'laugh at [oneself] as one would have to laugh in order to laugh out of the *whole* truth' (*GS* 1). Thus, again this shows that Nietzsche's notion of ideal 'artistic distance' represents a complex state. For it combines the ability to see the details of one's life, including one's suffering and affects, as part of a wider story, and to be able to '*laugh at*' them, while simultaneously feeling and embracing them.

(Additionally, although I will not explore this here, I contend that this reference to 'laughter' at *GS* 1 also illustrates why, for Nietzsche, laughter has an 'alliance with wisdom' in a similar way to artistic distance. Because if one is truly able to 'laugh' at oneself as a 'whole', e.g. as part of a 'species' for example (ibid), it means one is not taking oneself or the minutiae of one's daily life too seriously. Instead, as with artistic distance, one is seeing things for what they really are, as part of a bigger picture.)

To summarise, then, Nietzsche suggests that certain higher individuals, as 'artists', are able to identify certain principal traits of their lives, and present them in a new life-affirming way. As a result, this kind of transfigurative process again involves an 'epistemic' element, where salient features are revealed, as well as an element of glorification.

[26] This idea is also supported by the fact that Nietzsche suggests it also takes a 'certain kind' of individual with sufficient *strength* to see life *as* beautiful (e.g. even things that are 'hateful' and 'ugly' (*WP*,852; cf.Z,II,7) (Reginster 2014,35).

Thus, contrary to the analogy of a spectator who experiences an aesthetic transfiguration of their lives in a more passive sense (e.g. via watching tragedy, where the tragedy is doing the work for them), it seems that these kinds of individuals are essentially more active participants given that they are doing this for themselves.

This kind of self-transfiguration is also reflected elsewhere. For example, we can see it in Nietzsche's suggestion that ideal 'individuals', having determined 'what is necessary' in themselves, can then go about transfiguration, 'interpreting and arranging events' (*GS* 277), finding the right perspective to make things redeemable 'backwards' and 'forwards' (*EH* II,10), so that they can make their life affirmable (Ridley 2005, xix). Nietzsche suggests that these kinds of necessities do not just include a consideration of one's primary traits in isolation, but necessities in relation to one's 'second nature', produced by and through our culture, and one's circumstances.

Therefore, in order to 'become who we are', 'we must be honest with ourselves not merely as pieces of nature, as animals in an undesigned world, but as pieces of "second nature", as animals whose character and circumstances are significantly constituted by culture' (ibid, xi). Thus, there are various kinds of necessities which need to be considered and, when possible, affirmed.

Denham considers how this kind of process could work with reference to Goethe's story about Tasso, an artist who is struggling in life for various reasons (e.g. financially, socially, and the fact he is beholden to a powerful, commercial, wealthy society). Goethe suggests Tasso has a kind of self-transfiguration in response to his antagonistic relationship with Antonio, who is an 'ultimate usurer' and schemer of his times (Denham 2014, 168–69). Within the story, Goethe claims, after many destructive battles, the two men finally 'transform a destructive conflict into a union of opposites, through their mutual recognition of the way in which each is necessary to each other' (ibid).

Thus, Tasso's artistry finally enables him to 'transcend his personal fears and his hostility towards Antonio' (ibid, 197), and he recognises how their identities and actions are 'bound up with the other's', and how the 'identity of each man is shaped by the dynamics of their conflict'.

1.3 Transfiguration promotes greater self-formation

It is important to note that this kind of transfiguration not only provides a way of 'reinterpreting' and making one's life more truly affirmable for oneself; it also has a more fundamental functional and 'ethical' purpose. For, while Nietzsche suggests that most conscious thought is epiphenomenal (as I will discuss further later), at the same time, if a person's conscious thought is somehow complementary to and more aligned with their own determined values, this may also have some beneficial effects on their self-formation.

For example, to sketch out Nietzsche's concept of 'self-formation', he claims that, on rare occasions, certain ideal people are capable of forming a kind of Nietzschean 'self', which has some sort of 'unity', or greater levels of 'selfhood' (as it seems to be achieved in degrees and never fully attained). This can be explained in reference to his claim that we are all driven by a battle of underlying, primarily subconscious 'drives'. For he proposes that, despite the fact that the majority of people are 'merely passive conduits for various disparate forces', some rare individuals, 'due perhaps to conscious design but more likely due to fortuitous circumstances', 'actively collect, order and intensify some of those disparate forces' (Gemes 2009b, 42). What is more, he suggests, they do this by developing an integrated hierarchical structure of drives which is aligned around their highest, strongest drives.[27]

Therefore, in Nietzsche's view, these rare individuals become more coordinated and unified, and function better as a kind of 'total organism', with more 'autonomy' and 'will', because they are aligned and working as a *whole* organism in concert, supporting the expression of their highest primary drives.[28] (However, despite this level of unity, it is important to note that, in Nietzsche's view, this process is never complete or at rest, since the process towards self-formation and self-overcoming is ongoing.)

However, returning to the point, on Nietzsche's account, it also appears that a crucial ingredient, which can help an individual to develop greater self-formation, is the attainment of some kind of *conscious* affirmation of their *own* necessary traits, so that they can 'will' their own values, and, ultimately, overcome them. For example, this becomes evident in Nietzsche's call for individuals to engage in a revaluation of their inherited values, in order for them to somehow 'purify' themselves from unhealthy values and seek out and 'trust' in their *own* highest values.[29]

Additionally, Richardson (2009) argues that, for true Nietzschean selfhood, as well as a hierarchy of drives, a 'genealogical insight' is needed. This entails a kind of conscious insight into one's values. Meanwhile, Katsafanas (2011,113) suggests that agential unity also requires 'a certain kind of harmony between the agent's reflective and unreflective aspects at the time of action'.

Furthermore, to become a true free 'self', one also has to overcome nihilism, which not only entails conscious affirmation of oneself but also freedom from unhealthy inherited metaphysical notions (May 2009), thus enabling affirmation of *all* that is fated, including the incomprehensibly complex nature of reality. (Therefore, while an ascetic priest could potentially attain a hierarchy of drives, structured around their master drives, they would not be 'free' because they would still be under the influence of

[27] This kind of hierarchical structure is also attained when weaker drives are somehow 'trained' (e.g. *EH*, Clever,9; *UM*III,2) or directed by a stronger, master drive, which leads them away from their original objective and redirects them so they follow a secondary goal in line with the stronger drive. (Consequently, they are not repressed, but rather express themselves via a secondary aim, often by means of sublimation.)

[28] Consequently, Gemes (2009b) suggests that Nietzschean agency is linked with this valorised notion of unity, whereby people are only capable of 'real' agency if they have achieved a sufficient level of coherence. This structure also enables them to achieve greater life-enhancement by giving maximum expression to as many drives as possible.

[29] Janaway 2007,122.

the life-denying ascetic ideal. Therefore, one needs to be capable of total conscious life-affirmation (ibid).)

Yet, returning to the artistic transfigurative process, this account explains why, in Nietzsche's view, for those capable of greater life-affirmation, it is the 'vehicle of self-overcoming par excellence' (Denham 2014, 192). This is because it may potentially help them consciously to affirm them*selves* in relation to the world, and put greater motivational weight behind their *own* highest drives.

As May notes, if the 'whole self is pleasing to the individual', this 'helps to release her power and encourage her towards the actions for which she is predisposed and of which she is capable' (2009,93). However, if someone is 'dissatisfied' with themselves, 'even if she is otherwise a well-functioning individual, [she] will be "continually ready for revenge" (*GS* 290)', and revenge is a 'great obstacle to the attainment of freedom' and selfhood (ibid).

Thus, if successful, the aesthetic transfigurative process may somehow, in time, play a role in helping an individual to become *more truly themselves*. Consequently, Denham (2014, 192) comments that this 'depends… on our ability to transcend our given, individual natures, to master our passions in their given, natural forms… just as artists must master their personal matters and subject matter (whatever terrible monsters it contains)' and as gardeners cultivate plants.

> *'The man who has overcome his passions entered into possession of the most fertile ground; like the colonist who has mastered the forests and the swamps. To sow the seeds of good spiritual works in the soil of the subdued passion is then the immediate urgent task. The overcoming itself is only a means, not a goal; if it is not so viewed, all kinds of weeds and devilish nonsense will quickly spring up in this rich soil now unoccupied, and soon there will be more rank confusion than there ever was before.' (HH,'Wanderer',53)*

However, bearing in mind Nietzsche's notion of selfhood, and his claims about the epiphenomenality of most conscious thought (which I outline in section 1.4), I suggest that Denham's account is inadequate in that it does not address the fact that one couldn't cultivate one's drives in a straightforward, directly conscious and active way, as a gardener may cultivate his plants. Rather, as I will illustrate over the course of this thesis, such a transformation could potentially be promoted by an artistic, wholly-transformative, transfigurative process which somehow enables certain individuals to 'get behind' and affirm their drives in a less consciously-directed way via the interpretations that they affirm. Indeed, this highlights why this kind of distinctive *holistic* artistic model is needed to resolve this tension.

For we can begin to see how this kind of transfiguration could take place indirectly, assisted by the right kind of life-affirming interpretations, when Katsafanas (2012) notes how, according to Nietzsche's account, conscious thought could have some kind of potency in complementing drive formation in an

indirect way, despite his claims about epiphenomenality. For, he points out that, for Nietzsche, conscious thought can have some causal influence on our motives, and thus on our actions, because 'the particular way in which a sensation moves us, is dependent upon the interpretation that accompanies the sensation'. Thus 'sensation and emotion acquire motivational directions only in light of interpretations' (ibid, 18–19).

This idea can be better understood if we consider how a person may associate the pain they experience in the gym as attractive, because they think of it as 'healthy', whereas they would likely be concerned by the same pain if they experienced it as part of an illness (ibid, 18). This point can also be illustrated by Nietzsche's comment that what 'really arouses indignation' in people 'against suffering, is not suffering as such but the meaninglessness of suffering' (*GM* II,7). Therefore, 'what moves us is not suffering as such but sensation coupled with a thought about its meaning' (ibid).

As a result, Katsafanas suggests that, for Nietzsche, conscious thought can be 'causally efficacious' (ibid, 22) to an extent. However, contrary to how we often think of conscious thought, it is not guaranteed to have an 'instantaneous' decisive impact on what we do (ibid); instead, our actions are produced as the outcome of a complex interplay between one's conscious thought and one's drives. As Katsafanas puts it: 'Rather than a unidirectional causal path from motives to willing to action,… we have a play of interacting forces that modify one another and eventually result in action' (ibid, 22). He continues, 'the will is… one source of motivation among many', which 'reinforce[s] other motives by placing its motivational weight behind them' (ibid, 26f). Therefore, conscious thought does not act like a direct 'trigger', but instead will either succeed (or not) at weighting an outcome in a particular direction.

1.4 Plausibility of epistemic claim

Yet, is this reading plausible? For, to take just one aspect, I am suggesting that, according to Nietzsche, certain individuals, by engaging in this process of aesthetic self-transfiguration, are somehow capable of attaining a deeper understanding of themselves and their life, along with a positive re-evaluation of it. But, as mentioned, in light of Nietzsche's claims that most conscious thought is epiphenomenal,[30] it appears that any *self-directed* attempts to seek self-knowledge, if possible, would be extremely hard. For example, it seems extremely unlikely that we could engage in any form of effective self-reflection, for the following reasons:

[30] For Nietzsche, consciousness is a 'shallow phenomenon' and a 'weak, irrelevant, even disruptive force' (Gemes 2006,199).

- Nietzsche suggests that we can never really be consciously certain about the true nature of our underlying motives because conscious thought is 'secretly guided and channelled' by the agent's determined drives (*BGE* 3).
- Also, even if one could access them, conscious conceptual thought is incapable of picking up on or grasping the huge complexity of our underlying motivations and/or their subtler forms (Katsafanas 2015, 9f).
- Additionally, we are influenced not only by complex, multilayered motivations (the complexity of which we cannot comprehend), but also by external environmental factors, such as diet, health, exercise, and climate, which influence our thoughts and actions (ibid, 12).
- Furthermore, our thought is 'secretly guided' by drives, so our perception of events can be distorted by underlying motives – and we may (unknowingly) selectively pick out certain elements in a situation to support a particular interpretation (ibid, 16), 'such as the jealous agent [who] sees the phone call as furtive, the lateness as suspicious, the handkerchief as damning' (Katsafanas 2012, 13).

Thus, consciousness is the 'last link in a chain' (*KSA* 12,1[61]/*WLN* 60) and we are 'strangers to ourselves' (*GM* Preface, 1). We can have no idea about the real motives of our actions as we are being influenced by a multitude of different factors, and our decisions 'have many layers of complexity that elude ordinary awareness'. Therefore, 'rather than attributing actions to discrete causes, we should see them as emanations from the "total state" or our mental economy. Conscious decisions, thoughts and motives are one part of this total state, but only a small part' (Katsafanas 2015, 17).

However, while it seems that these obstacles should make any form of self-conscious reflection impossible, at the same time, I contend that there is evidence to suggest that Nietzsche does not exclude its possibility.[31] For example, as noted, Nietzsche argues that certain individuals (such as himself), with a fortuitously strong constitution, can handle more 'truths' about themselves than others. Also, he cannot completely discount the possibility of truth-seeking because, if he did so, we could not make sense of his claims in his genealogical work, and, in turn, his normative project would collapse.[32] Moreover, as a trained philologist, he advocates an empirical, skilled, rigorous methodology for truth-seeking (*GM* Preface,3). But does this still render *self*-reflection useless?

Katsafanas (2015) sets out to resolve this by explaining that Nietzsche suggests, while we cannot escape our partial, perspectival, needs-based outlook (which renders self-reflection opaque), genealogy can offer us a powerful empirical tool for self-knowledge. This is because it allows us to observe ourselves

[31] Although some commentators suggest his theory of perspectivism, along with other notions, prevent us from accessing any kind of truth (cf. Richardson 2001,18f and Schacht 1993,347).
[32] He makes ethical, prudential claims about certain types of people and life-enhancing conditions for them. But, for Nietzsche, this is not to say we can ever fully access and grasp the true complexity of reality.

by essentially 'looking away from ourselves' (ibid, 2) – an idea which is reflected in Nietzsche's comment in *TI* 1,35: 'the psychologist must look away from himself in order to see at all'.[33] Nietzsche also alludes to this idea in the following:

> *'Direct self-observation [unmittelbare Selbstbeobachtung] is not nearly sufficient for us to know ourselves: we require history, for the past continues to flow within us in a hundred waves.' (HH* II,223*)*[34]

Katsafanas argues that this comment refers to the fact that, in Nietzsche's view, genealogy enables us to 'know ourselves' better by providing us with a wide-ranging view of our historical landscape. This gives us a far broader perspective and enables us to spot new things that we could not see 'in the moment' from our 'everyday' position, embedded in a particular context and culture. For instance, he suggests that genealogy enables us to notice certain 'milder, middle degrees' (Katsafanas 2015, 11) of our affects which have shaped us significantly over time, and yet so far 'elude[d] introspection', often because we commonly 'attribute our actions to coarse, forceful motives such as lust, anger, love, pity and so on'.

Katsafanas likens this process to the way in which a geologist studies the landscape and is able to notice how subtle and yet prevailing winds or constant rainfall have shaped the land over time (ibid, 23). This could also be similar to the way that artists, such as Monet, use a very long brush to be able to stand back from their work and observe patterns that were previously unnoticeable.

In addition, Katsafanas suggests that the broader perspective of genealogy can also reveal things by enabling us to notice an 'unnoticed aspect of [a]… conceptual scheme through which we experience and interpret the world' (ibid, 24f). For example, we can see this in how Nietzsche notes that our modern conception of agency – which separates the doer from the 'deed' (*GM* I,13) – influences how we experience the world, where I 'tend to experience my choices as wholly undetermined by and unreflective of my character' (Katsafanas 2015,25) (to our detriment, in his view). However, when viewed in a wider genealogical context, we can see that this conceptual scheme is in fact contingent and therefore optional and could be 'supplanted' by another. For such a distinction is not recognised in the 'agent of antiquity' (ibid).

Consequently, returning to the main point, I contend that Nietzsche also felt that aesthetic transfiguration can serve as a similar kind of empirical tool to that of genealogy, which is able to reveal 'truths' which are not accessible via direct self-reflection. I propose that if we accept the feasibility of Nietzsche's account in the context of genealogy, it seems plausible that a skilled ideal individual, as an

[33] Cited in Katsafanas 2015,22.
[34] Ibid.

'artist', could utilise artistic distance and their artistic skills and 'instinct' (*TI* IX,7) as a tool in a similar way.

To recap briefly, I have proposed that Nietzsche suggests that a 'higher' 'artistic' individual is able somehow to transcend their everyday perspective, and subsequently gain an artistic distance from their life by viewing it as a 'whole', as an 'aesthetic phenomenon', drawing on the powers of aesthetically motivated Rausch. Moreover, since they are viewing things with an 'artistic' eye, 'unclouded' by thoughts of personal or practical concerns, this makes them more finely attuned and everything becomes 'interesting' and open to scrutiny.

Thus, this viewpoint enables such individuals to notice new things that were previously unnoticeable, because they have 'lifted' themselves, to some extent, out of their 'ordinary' perspective on life. So, I suggest this could be considered another way of 'looking away from ourselves', as it too, like genealogy, equips them with a wider, more removed, and novel perspective.[35]

In support of this idea, I contend that Nietzsche makes a direct reference to this kind of process in *TI* IX, 7–9 where he discusses a kind of 'born psychologist' who, by utilising these kinds of *artistic* skills, is able to participate in this process and actively reveal the 'main features' of their objects of study, such as their lives. For example, Nietzsche proposes that he can do this because, like a 'painter', he 'instinctively guards… against seeing for the sake of seeing' (*TI* IX, 7). This suggests that he 'guards… against' looking for the sake of looking *for* something, that is, with an idea or objective already in mind, as we often do in our 'ordinary' perception, clouded by personal interests and concerns of utility. Instead, he 'leaves it to his instinct, his camera obscura, to sift and strain "nature", the "case", the "experience" … He is conscious only of the universal, the conclusion, the outcome: he knows nothing of that arbitrary abstraction from the individual case' (ibid).

In this light, I propose that this kind of 'psychologist' is able to use their artistic 'instinct' to attain this kind of artistic distance from themselves, so that they are able draw out certain necessary features that they could not 'see' before.

The idea of the 'camera obscura' also provides a visual analogy of another method where a viewer is, in a sense, removed from 'data' so they can spot new things. For in a 'camera obscura', when light is projected through a pin hole, an image of the scene is then presented on the wall not only upside down, but also inverted. Thus, when they first look at the image, they are likely initially to be a little disorientated, because they are less equipped with their usual reference points. Therefore, they are potentially more likely to view the image data simply *as it is*, as blocks of colours or shapes, and be

[35] This does not mean we can transcend our perspectival outlook, but it does give us a wider perspective so that we can notice new things.

able to spot new things or patterns in a similar way to when one views something from 'far' away, as genealogy may allow in a chronological sense (i.e. over a broader range of time).

This idea is also reinforced when Nietzsche comments later in this passage: 'this practice of lying in the dirt in front of petits faits[36] is unworthy of an artist who is whole and complete. Seeing what is – that belongs to another species of spirit, an anti-artistic, factual one. You have to know who you are' (ibid). Again, this indicates that the artist, in some way, is able to reveal 'truths' in a less 'prejudiced' way, in a way we might more commonly associate with standard scientific practice and other 'anti-artistic' methods.

Consequently, Nietzsche comments, while 'this process is called idealizing. We can get rid of a *prejudice* here: contrary to common belief, idealization does not consist in removing or weeding out things that are small and incidental. *Much more decisive is an enormous drive to force out the main features* so that everything else disappears in the process' (*TI* IX,8). Thus, this process enables a psychologist artist to rise above 'little facts', to '*force out the main features*' and begin to see 'what is' (ibid).

Nietzsche also notes that a key mechanism in this process is the power of Rausch, which 'makes us release ourselves onto things, we force them to accept us', enabling the psychologist 'artist' to have artistic 'insight' and draw out salient elements (ibid). In fact, Nietzsche says that without this kind of 'intoxication', there would be no kind of 'aesthetic… vision'. Consequently, this process, in the context of an active 'artist', draws on the same two key mechanisms of transfiguration: namely, artistic 'distance' and Rausch.

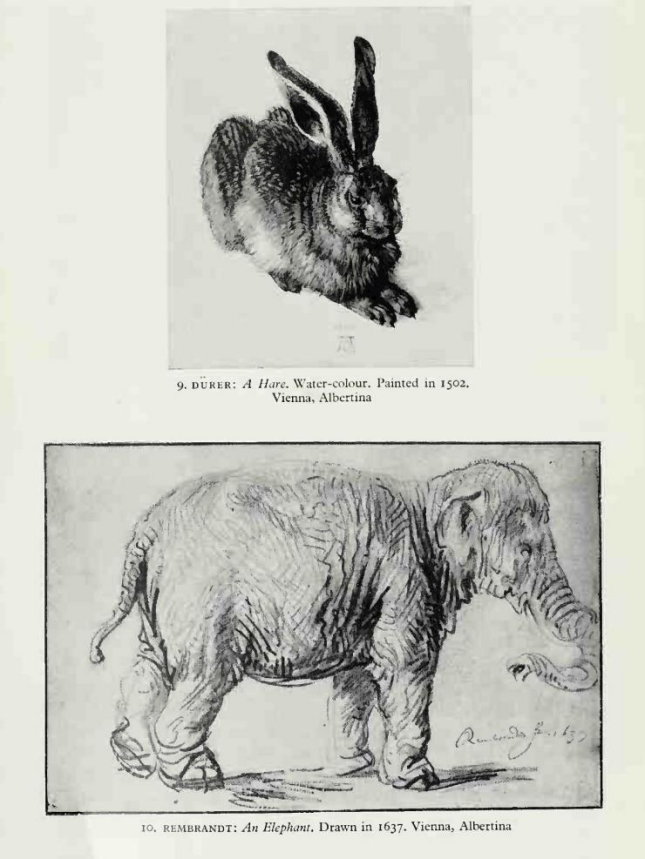
Denham (2014) reinforces this idea that art, for Nietzsche, can provide a tool in this way via these two elements. She suggests that art is in fact 'best placed to present "what is *necessary* in things"' (ibid, 197) because it '*penetrates beyond* the contingencies of ordinary perception to reveal what is truly necessary in its object' (ibid, 196) by 'illuminating the features that make it the very thing that it is' (ibid, 197). Thus, art is also naturally linked and complementary to Nietzsche's doctrine of *amor fati*, where he calls on one to 'to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them' (*GS*(2) 276).

As such, this 'artistic idealizing' could arguably be regarded as a more effective way of capturing the principal elements of something than by viewing it in its formless 'natural' state. As Nietzsche puts it: 'Nature, artistically considered, is no model. It exaggerates, it distorts, it leaves gaps. Nature is chance' (*TI* IX,7). Therefore, it is 'chaotic and formless' (Denham 2014, 197), which suggests that we need a selective artistic approach just to adopt an effective perspective on something, and make sense of it.

[36] I.e. little facts.

While it may be a selective *artistic* interpretation, at the same time it can still potentially broaden one's understanding of something.

This point can be reinforced by some actual artistic examples. For in the images below, in the second work, Rembrandt effectively demonstrates the capacity of a skilled artist to identify and select principal traits in something (which Nietzsche claims artists *in particular* are adept at doing) because, while the work offers fewer details, it does not take anything away from it.



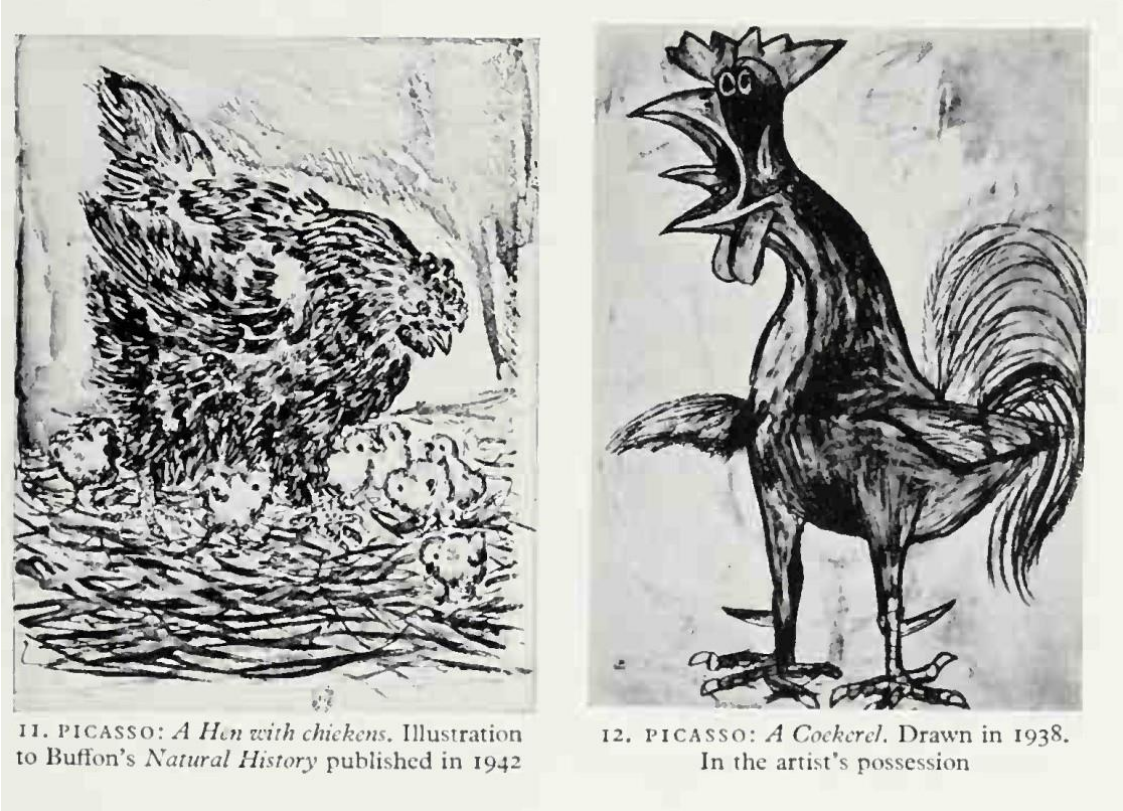
9. DÜRER: *A Hare*. Water-colour. Painted in 1502. Vienna, Albertina

10. REMBRANDT: *An Elephant*. Drawn in 1637. Vienna, Albertina

Illustration from Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (1950, 8)

In fact, this selective skill is essential in art, because one can *never* present *everything* one sees; instead, one *has* to choose certain salient elements, which together represent the whole. And, perhaps in a different way, an artist's skill in identifying principal traits is also effectively demonstrated in how a caricaturist is able to pick out the essential elements of a person's character or face so that we immediately recognise the person in minimal lines.

We can also see this (and reflect on how artworks can bring out *different* principal features in alternative ways) if we consider two of Picasso's renderings of a chicken in the next image.



11. PICASSO: *A Hen with chickens.* Illustration to Buffon's *Natural History* published in 1942

12. PICASSO: *A Cockerel.* Drawn in 1938. In the artist's possession

Illustration from Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (1950, 9)

While the first picture may be better at capturing the 'mere appearance' of a chicken, one could say that the second, the caricature, tells us more about the actual nature of the chicken, such as its 'aggressiveness, its cheek and its stupidity' (Gombrich 1950, 9). In addition, the caricature might tell us something about ourselves and how we respond to the chicken, perhaps reminding us of human awkwardness which we identify in the chicken? If so, this fits well with Nietzsche's notion of perspectivism,[37] which suggests that, while we may be able to gain greater understanding via more perspectives, our 'truths' will always be partial, perspectival, and in relation to ourselves.

In view of this, I suggest that the epistemic part of the aesthetic transfigurative process, for Nietzsche, is similar to genealogy insofar as it could be regarded as a similar kind of empirical method[38] that enables a 'psychologist', as an 'artist', to 'look away from oneself' and gain a wider perspective, noticing new things through a kind of factual and less 'prejudiced' process.

However, the two processes also differ in that genealogy initially seems to be a more cognitive process as it is able to reveal these things by utilising an empirical, skilled, rigorous study of facts over a long historical perspective, so that we can 'learn to think differently' and in turn 'feel' differently (*D* 103). The artistic transfiguration, in contrast, uses other elements such as artistic 'instinct', aesthetic

[37] See section 2.2.
[38] The mature Nietzsche suggests an empirical method is the 'only' way to access reality (see *TI* III,6).

intoxication, and artistic distance, which seem to have both cognitive and affective dimensions from the outset.

1.5 Requirement of 'life-affirming' art

To summarise, I propose that, according to Nietzsche, certain 'artistic' higher individuals can use this kind of aesthetic transfigurative process in part, as an empirical tool to reveal certain 'necessities' in themselves by obtaining a wider perspective on their lives, similar to Nietzsche's use of genealogy.

Additionally, in both cases, Nietzsche suggests that by enabling an individual to notice new features about their life in different ways, this can help to undermine their life-denying values and make way for new life-affirming ones. For, in genealogy, he aims to undermine certain life-denying values (that pertain to, for example, false, timeless, wholesale, standard ideas perpetuated by our morality) by highlighting that certain ways in which we think are contingent and therefore optional. And he suggests that the aesthetic transfigurative process can help to promote greater conscious life-affirmation because, by enabling an individual to reveal necessary details of their life (within this process), they are prompted to reframe or reconceptualise them with an affective dimension, thus re-orientating their affects in a way that celebrates their life and 'necessities' in relation to the world. Thus, while 'suffering', for example, could be considered a 'necessity' in life, our evaluation of it, in Nietzsche's view, could change via this process, from a life-denying one embedded in an ascetic priest's narrative to one based on a life-affirming Greek tragedy.

But, as noted, Nietzsche suggests aesthetic transfiguration is not necessarily guaranteed to have a life-enhancing[39] outcome since it requires *a particular kind* of art to make it life-affirming, an ideal model being Greek tragedy, which enables us even to affirm 'pain' and suffering. We can also see this reflected in the way he repudiates certain life-denying kinds of art, such as the art which springs from 'decadence' – which, in particular, has been fostered by Socratic, Platonic, and Christian views. Because instead of promoting a brave and bold engagement with life (and its flux, complexity, and uncertainty), Nietzsche suggests that decadent art only serves to promote the denial of life and escapism into some kind of otherworldly comfort – and thus drive 'disintegration' (*TI* IX, 35).

For example, Nietzsche suggests that Socratic dialogue 'arose out of an *inability to embrace and tolerate the tragic nature of life*, instead seeking *refuge in an illusion of control* on which virtue, knowledge, and happiness neatly align' (Golob 2018, 11). Additionally: 'Platonic idealism provides the metaphysical accompaniment to this weakness by sanctifying *another world sanitised of the*

[39] Nietzsche also suggests truths can 'be ugly' and can 'arise out of evil and untruth' (May 1999,180), emphasising that there is no natural positive attribute to the revelation of truths (contrary to Plato's notion of truth).

imperfections of this one' (ibid, 12). Furthermore, Nietzsche comments: 'From the very outset Christianity was essentially and pervasively the feeling of disgust and weariness which life felt for life' (*BT* 5).

Nietzsche also reflected this view in his response to Romantic art, which he says is a reaction of 'those who suffer from the impoverishment of life' (*GS* 370). In contrast, he proposes that Dionysian art results from those who suffer from 'over-fullness of life' (ibid). Thus, the art he advocates is one that affirms life head on and bravely in its true complexity and fluidity, with all its hardships and uncertainties. As Golob (2018, 13) notes, it seems that, along with other tactics, such as his genealogy and call for a revaluation of values, Nietzsche is using art and life-affirming aesthetic transfiguration to try and combat the influence of decadence and release certain people from this kind of life-denying outlook.

We can also see how alternative kinds of aesthetic transfiguration, with varied motivations, can have very different outcomes. Consider, for example, the fact that, in Nietzsche's view, the early works of Wagner had a very different impact from that of his later works. For Nietzsche refers to Wagner's former work in the *Birth of Tragedy* as a 'solution to the problem of decadence' (Golob 2018, 15) and his later works as ones which instead promote decadence, wherein Wagner 'gradually align[s] himself with precisely the decadent life-denial found in Christianity' (ibid), thus making 'music sick' (*The Case of Wagner*,5).

1.6 If something is 'glorified' or 'whitewashed' are we truly affirming it?

With all of this in mind, it is important to consider how aesthetic transfiguration relates to Nietzsche's doctrine of '*amor fati*' in his later works. For, in this doctrine, Nietzsche advocated that one has to affirm the 'whole truth of one's life – what was and is … to be embraced without flinching, without escape or erasure' (Janaway 2007, 261),[40] so:

> *'one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessity, still less conceal it -…but love it... '* (EH II,10)

And, in this context, Nietzsche regarded art and aesthetic transfiguration as a crucial tool to further this ideal. As Denham notes: 'In Nietzsche's mature work, a driving force behind his high regard for art and artistic creativity is the existential goal of *amor fati*: the love of what fate has given, the endorsement of what is, just as it is' (Came 2014, 189).

[40] This ideal is also reflected in Nietzsche's notion of 'eternal recurrence' (e.g. *GS*285).

In this way, through art, 'the essence of the attitude of *amor fati* is… a refusal to condemn what blind nature has made of us and for us, combined with a recognition of one's own ability to "re-form" how we experience and how we evaluate life, and thereby to create a new identity for ourselves' (ibid).

However, let us again consider the notion that one ideally needs to glorify life with a *certain kind* of art to make it life-affirming. Could this perhaps raise the suggestion, and therefore the tension, that one is using art to falsify life in some way, and not embracing it '*as it is*' (because this step is contingent, given that one could choose whether to use life-affirming art or not)? Does this mean that, while art enables us to embrace life, it is also in some ways helping us to avoid our reality by somehow glorifying it, where this is not a necessary step? As Golob (2018,17) comments: 'There is a persistent concern in Nietzsche that by beautifying life art serves simultaneously as an incentive to embrace it and as a way of escaping its realities. Crudely put, is it truly affirmation if what one affirms is whitewashed?'

1.6.1 Form and values built from the 'ground up'

Young seems to think that this is a problem. For he suggests that, by bundling up the details of one's life into a dramatic narrative about human existence for example, one is in fact in some way concealing the details of one's life as opposed to embracing one's life 'just as it is'. Thus, he claims that Nietzsche failed in his attempt to properly measure up to his own ideal of *amor fati*, charging him with a 'cowardly retreat', and 'escapist inauthenticity' (Young 1992,147). As Denham (2014,195) observes, Young argues that Nietzsche retreated from his initial ambition of *amor fati* by suggesting that an ideal person, instead of taking on the 'hard task of affirming one's own, *individual* existence', should indulge in 'an identification with a "*trans*-individual" being'. In so doing, they become the kind of person who does not 'will' the details of their *individual* life to recur, but instead wills 'just life'.

Furthermore, Denham notes that this idea of a 'trans-individual entity', according to Young's reading, could, at its worst, be regarded as 'not far from the traditional notion of "God"' in that it appears to require the valorisation of an entity that 'lives on in his children' (ibid, 196). Young seems to be implying that, by engaging in life-affirming self-transfiguration, one is, in some sense, minimising and rising above the actual particular details of one's life. Can Young's concerns be addressed?

Denham thinks so, suggesting that Young's charges are in fact based on a confusion between a kind of phenomenal experience and the evaluative implications of this process. She argues, for example, that, while Nietzsche advocated the adoption of some form of 'artistic distance' on life (thus lifting us out of our 'everyday' perspective), this does not mean that Nietzsche believed it also had a kind of distancing effect on our passions or evaluations (ibid).

Denham illustrates this point by highlighting that, in this kind of transfigurative process, both the acts of reframing and re-evaluating human experience (relating to the details of an individual's life) are simultaneously built 'from the ground up', and as such they are still very much connected to, and 'interested' in, the details of one's life (ibid, 198).

Firstly, this can be supported by the idea (outlined in the previous section) that, contrary to the notion that Nietzsche's aesthetic self-transcendence rerefocusses an individual's gaze *away* from, or falsifies, the particular details of one's life, this process actually enables an individual to '*penetrate beyond* the contingencies of ordinary perception to reveal' its necessary elements (ibid, 196). Therefore, it is plausible to argue that this kind of artistic interpretation does not entail *focussing away from* but rather *focussing on* the 'necessary' details of one's life.

Secondly, it seems that, according to Nietzsche, in this kind of transfigurative process, it is not a matter of first discerning 'what is necessary' and then using artistic techniques to stylise them. The life-affirming aesthetic transfiguration and evaluative attribution both essentially *start in* the act of reframing and determining 'what is necessary'. And thus new, life-affirming evaluations are 'created' 'from the ground' up (ibid, 198).

This idea that, in artistry, form-giving and value-giving happen simultaneously can also be illustrated by the fact that Nietzsche not only often links artistry with 'imposing form on something that had been formless'[41] (Ridley 2013,6), but also in the fact that he links this act of giving form with giving 'meaning' or evaluations, thus making forms 'evaluatively charged' from the outset (ibid, 7). For example, in *GM*, when Nietzsche is discussing certain form-givers (in this case not 'ordinary' artists but state creators), he says:

> *'they are the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are:—wherever they appear something new soon arises, a ruling structure that lives, in which parts and functions are delimited and coordinated, in which nothing whatever finds a place that has* ***not first been assigned a "meaning" in relation to the whole****…'(GM II,17).*

In this way, Nietzsche is also thinking along 'traditional (perhaps Romantic) organicist lines: because the parts acquire their "meaning" from their "relation to the whole", the resultant structure "*lives*"' (Ridley 2013,7). Ridley continues: 'valuations of one sort or another are an integral dimension of the patterns of meaning that form-giving or artistry creates: they come for free, as it were, with artistry in what he takes to be its most fundamental sense' (ibid). So, with form-giving comes evaluations, and the latter is not a secondary addition.

[41] In this way, he often refers to artists in a broader sense to mean anyone who imposes form.

Yet, as noted, 'some meanings are better than others' (ibid),[42] and Nietzsche only advocates a transfigurative process that is life-affirming. For this means we can then 'understand reality more deeply *and* value it' *at the same time*, where the two are intrinsically linked from the outset (Denham 2014, 190). In this context, while 'attunement' in this process requires a kind of self-transcendent interest in order to 'effect the "idealizing" of what is otherwise an arbitrary and senseless sequence of natural events' (ibid, 198), this is not to say that the evaluative consequences of this kind of insight are uninterested in the details. Instead, this process reintroduces an '*interested*, individual subject', who is able to take on life *more*, by 'realigning our evaluative dispositions at the deepest level, proposing novel and creative ways of framing human experience' (ibid).

Therefore, it seems plausible to suggest that Young's charges are not successful. On the contrary, this kind of transfigurative process could be said to be *connected* to the principal features of one's life 'from the ground up' in the identification of their form. And with form-creation comes evaluations, where the latter is not an optional add on. This is also reinforced by Nietzsche's notion of perspectivism, which posits that our underlying drives instil our perception of things with an evaluative outlook. As a result, we can never have a perspective on something without a kind of evaluation attached to it.[43]

So, if whitewashing means altering one's evaluative slant, this does not mean that one is necessarily concealing or hiding from the details of one's life; it simply entails shifting our perspective on them. (If one were altering the details or 'rounding' them off, which Nietzsche repudiates,[44] this would be a different matter.)

(It is also interesting, in this regard, to consider that Nietzsche's ideal life-affirming art could be considered more 'truthful' than some life-denying art because, as I suggested earlier, the former seemingly requires an individual to be able to face the 'true' nature of reality boldly and realistically, recognising its chaos, flux, and uncertainty. Meanwhile, those who take 'refuge' in the beauty of form too much[45] (which is not realistic because it is too coherent) are not facing the true nature of life.)

Thus, for Denham (2014, 197), this kind of transfiguration does not allow Tasso to 'escape [the details of] his relationship with Antonio', but instead 'require[s] him to see it as necessary and inescapable'. It is not 'an abdication of his personal, individual and highly particular circumstances'; instead, it 'is more natural, surely, to understand it is as a revelation of who Tasso truly is in relation to Antonio, and of the ways in which the sufferings inflicted by the latter figure among the "necessities" of his own nature' (ibid, 198).

[42] For example, the ascetic priest 'sets up a field of meaning which encourages the devaluation of ordinary worldly existence in favour of a (non-existent) beyond', which Nietzsche claims is life-denying (Ridley 2013,7f).
[43] This is a constitutive part of our 'truths' (Leiter 1993,348f.).
[44] As Golob notes (2018,18), such '"rounding off" of reality is closely linked to its denial' (*GS*107).
[45] He repudiates 'the artists of decadence, who fundamentally have a nihilistic attitude toward life [and] take refuge in the beauty of form' (*WTP* III,852).

In this way, instead of shielding one from truth, aesthetic transfiguration allows one to handle more truth by transfiguring 'the general framework of experience' itself (Denham 2014, 189), as opposed to 'just this or that object of experience', and thus how we value it. As Denham notes: 'The role of artistry in achieving this attitude is not to obscure or veil the less palatable aspects of experience' (as in Nietzsche's early work), but 'rather to present reality in a transfigured form which reshapes our thoughts about it and the evaluative attitudes with which we respond to it' (ibid).

The notion that one is still very much engaged with the details of one's life is also reinforced if we recall Nietzsche's comment in *TI* X, 5, which argues that the power of transfiguration is so great that even pain can serve as a 'stimulus'. This clearly suggests that one is not escaping life, just reframing it. In this vein, Ridley (2013, 5–6) states: 'There are… different conceptions of aesthetic experience in play in Nietzsche's writings. But they have it in common that each is a mode of *thoroughly interested engagement* with life – with life as something to be embraced rather than stepped back from; even as something to be lusted after, whatever… its terrors'.

1.7 'Cheerfulness'

I have argued that Nietzsche advocates some of his 'higher' individuals as 'artists' to engage in a kind of aesthetic transfiguration of their life, which requires them to bravely confront the facts of their life (as opposed to hiding from them) with a kind of simultaneous reconceptualisation and revaluation of them. This, ideally, enables them to re-orientate their affects and celebrate the necessities of their life in relation to the world. To give further weight to this proposal, I contend that we can locate another good example of this kind of aesthetic transfigurative process at work in other passages in which Nietzsche suggests, while addressing an ingroup, that certain higher individuals 'as artists' ideally should have learnt a kind of 'cheerfulness' (e.g. *GS*(2) Preface, 4).

This state of 'cheerfulness' appears to arise from the fact that these individuals have first sought out a greater understanding of life, and consequently been 'burned' by it, and yet they have somehow been able to adjust their evaluations to it, thus re-orientating their affects for the better. Nietzsche suggests they do this via a kind of philosophical practice or 'self-cultivation'. Anderson and Cristy (2017, 1516) support this view, noting that Nietzsche did not intend this kind of 'cheerfulness' to be an 'unmediated, pre-reflective, and non-deliberative attitude' as might seem to be the case at first glance, but rather as a kind of 'cultivated second nature'. For Nietzsche, 'the right kind of cheerfulness is radically non-naïve; it expresses the overcoming of justified revulsion at calamitous aspects of life through a reflective higher-order affirmative attitude' (ibid, 1514).

For Anderson and Cristy, the character of this complex 'cultivated second nature' kind of 'cheerfulness' – which Nietzsche suggests he and other higher types have attained – becomes clearer when we consider the fact that, according to Nietzsche, it comes about when these 'higher types' have fully comprehended the 'catastrophic' event of the 'Death of god'[46] and the disorientation that it will bring (and that they too have suffered). Yet, they are able to embrace this event with 'cheerfulness', since they have discovered a 'great liberator' from their suffering (ibid, 1517f):

> *'ever since the day when the great liberator came to me: the idea that life could be an experiment of the seeker for knowledge – and not a duty, not a calamity, not trickery.– And knowledge itself: let it be something else for others;... for me it is a world of dangers and victories in which heroic feelings, too, find places to dance and play. "Life as a means to knowledge" – with this principle in one's heart one can live not only boldly but even gaily, and laugh gaily too.' (GS 324)*

As such, these individuals have discovered the 'great liberator' where they view 'life as a means to knowledge'. This change of perspective also means they can greet the 'death of god' and the demise of Christian/altruistic values with 'cheerfulness' because they can view it as a 'great opportunity for discovery, invention, and cultural renewal' (Anderson and Cristy 2017,1519). Their 'moral horizon' can be opened up and they can become free to 'frame' and create their 'own goals'. This allows them to view life not as overwhelming, but as a 'place of unlimited opportunity for enquiry' (ibid). Consequently, their 'cheerfulness' is certainly complex, for it combines an initial 'recognition of the catastrophe with its costs and an appreciation of liberating "consequences for ourselves", together with an affirmative affective attachment to the whole' (ibid, 1520).

This explains why Nietzsche refers to these individuals as 'convalescents'. They have first experienced the suffering and sense of loss brought on by this 'catastrophe', yet they have begun to convalesce from this position as they start to see life in this radically new way. They recognise that life is a 'problem', yet, with their new outlook, they love it again *because* it is a problem. Life now represents an arena for 'unlimited' enquiry.

What is particularly interesting, and most relevant for the present discussion, is precisely *how* they achieve this state of mind. Nietzsche claims that they achieve this perspective through a kind of ongoing philosophical practice so that, despite their initial response, they seek a moment of new 'knowing' with a moment of new 'valuing', and thus a re-orientation of the affects (ibid, 1519). However, this process does not happen on a purely cognitive level; it involves an alternative kind of philosophical process which draws on artistic sensibilities. For example, Anderson and Cristy (ibid, 1532–33) observe how Nietzsche likens this process to the way in which we can learn to love a piece of music:

[46] E.g. *GS*125.

> *'This is what happens to us in music: First one has to learn to hear a figure and melody at all, to detect and distinguish it, to isolate it and delimit it as a separate life. Then it requires some exertion and good will to tolerate it in spite of its strangeness….Finally, there comes a moment when we are used to it, when we wait for it, when we sense that we should miss it if it were missing; and now it continues to compel and enchant us relentlessly until we become its humble and enraptured lovers who desire nothing better from the world than it and only it.' (GS 334)*

Furthermore, Nietzsche suggests that one must also use this kind of practice so as to learn to love one's life:

> *'But that is what happens to us not only in music. That is how we have learned to love all the things we now love. In the end, we are always rewarded for our good will, our patience… with what is strange; gradually, it sheds its veil and turns out to be a new and indescribable beauty. That is its thanks for our hospitality. Even those who love themselves will have learned it this way; for there is no other way. Love, too, has to be learned.' (ibid)*

This account also reveals an interesting quality of the aesthetic experience itself, demonstrating that we do not always *immediately* respond to a good piece of artwork positively. Sometimes it can take a while for it to *grow* on us, until we have a sense that we will 'miss it'.

Thus, Nietzsche argues that this kind of process cannot merely be based on, or driven by, 'reason or education' alone; rather, one needs somehow to 'train it in' in this way (Anderson and Cristy 2017, 1532). To this end, Anderson and Cristy (ibid, 1531) suggest that Nietzsche presents this ability to attain 'cheerfulness' as part of achieving an 'intellectually carved out life', which can be carried out according to a special kind of scientific practice, *fröhlich*, which also draws on certain, seemingly artistic capacities and instincts. Nietzsche seems to refer to this alternative scientific ideal in the following passage:

> *'And even now the time seems remote when artistic energies and the practical wisdom of life will join with scientific thinking to form a higher organic system in relation to which scholars, physicians, artists, and legislators—as we know them at present—would have to look like paltry relics of ancient times.' (GS 113)*

What is interesting about this process is that it seems to mirror, again, how Nietzsche advocates a kind of artistic process in combination with the pursuit of new knowledge and re-evaluation, in the context of practising philosophy, as a kind of wholly-embodied process. The latter is not just undertaken at the level of cognition, but is also connected to our affects and the way we feel about things. It is also 'structurally analogous' (Anderson and Cristy 2017, 1532) to the aesthetic experience, since it combines the two key elements of artistic transfiguration as discussed before: Firstly, '*aesthetic appreciation* involves a powerful attachment to its object' (ibid), which 'makes things beautiful, attractive, and

desirable for us' (*GS* 299), thus generating a kind of affirmative affective attitude. Secondly, 'through the very same non-self-conscious, affective attitude, it affords us a distinctive sense of detachment, an "*artistic distance*"' (ibid), and, as a result, a kind of 'freedom above things' (*GS* 107).

This aesthetic affirmative attitude over time allures and enables one, with practice, to 'train in' a new affective stance. So, this transformation does not derive from a decision that someone has made through abstract reflection; instead, the 'role of practice… reappears as a decisive criterion of the attitude's affective character' (Anderson and Cristy 2017, 1532). As such, this kind of attachment 'must be learned through strategies involving more than "reason and education" alone' (ibid).

As a result, this kind of 'second-nature' 'cheerfulness' belongs 'to *affective* life and, therefore participates in the "automaticity" of emotions, which afford immediate responsiveness to evaluatively salient features of the world without relying on the subject's reflection and volition in the moment. In their second-natural version, however, such affects can acquire their automaticity only via special strategies. In particular, we must put them into place by *practicing* - training our own psyches, as it were' (ibid 1516).

In summary then, according to Nietzsche, certain capable artistic individuals can potentially use this kind of aesthetic transfigurative process to reconceptualise and simultaneously re-evaluate their lives, so that they can re-orientate their affects in a way that celebrates their life and characteristics in relation to the world.

Power from authenticity

As an aside, there is another element which demonstrates that for Nietzsche 'cheerfulness', or any kind of life-affirmation, should ideally be based on facing life as *honestly* as possible. This emerges from the fact he claims that if one does not really *believe* one is facing life truthfully, then one cannot experience real 'cheerfulness' or affirmation. This is because if we sense our own insincerity, when we are 'paper[ing] over our losses' (ibid, 1526), this will not have the power to make us feel 'at home in the world' and make life 'bearable', which comes from rigorously, honestly, and authentically facing life as truthfully as possible. As Nietzsche puts it: 'there are two very different kinds of cheerfulness. The true thinker always cheers and refreshes, whether he is expressing his seriousness or his humour…. By contrast, the cheerfulness one sometimes encounters in mediocre writers and brusque [*kurzangebundenen*] thinkers makes us miserable to read. (*SE* 2; *UM*,135)'.

In Nietzsche's view, there are also knock-on beneficial effects from *really* believing that we are genuinely affirming life *as* 'a problem' (*GS* 3), since it not only means that we must think we are capable of taking life on with all its hardships (and thus have a positive view of ourselves and our capabilities),

but it also awakens and prompts us to take on challenges, inciting our 'spirit of adventure' (Reginster 2014, 34).

In addition, 'happiness lies, in Nietzsche's view, in the taking up of challenges, the activity of confronting and overcoming resistance' (ibid, 35; e.g. *GM* I,10). Thus, the activity of *genuinely* taking on challenges – and expressing and overcoming drives – gives us a greater feeling of life-flourishing. This kind of attitude encourages active engagement in life. And this kind of active engagement also gives an individual more feeling of life-flourishing because, if they are successful, it makes them feel more effective as an organism. Therefore, it seems like a virtuous circle, if it is successful.[47] Reginster (2014, 34) comments: 'Nietzsche's new answer rests on a fundamental shift of perspective: he considers the tragic effect no longer from the perspective of the "spectator" but from that of the "artist". It is no longer a question of producing a deceptive but comforting *view* of life, but of inciting *a distinctive sort of active engagement with it*. The tragic artist invites its audience to respond to "the terrifying and the questionable" in our existence as he does – as so many challenges, calls to adventure, or opportunities for overcoming. His distinctive achievement is to represent "a powerful enemy, greater hardship, a problem that arouses aversion" in such a way as to awaken "*the warlike in our souls"*- that is to say, our *spirit of adventure*, our will to power, which welcomes and "seeks out suffering"[48] precisely in so far as it is recognized as an essential ingredient of the pursuit of power.'

[47] See *GS* 283.
[48] See *TI* IX,24.

Section 2 Adopting an artistic exploration to promote self-alignment over a 'lived life'

So far I have illustrated how Nietzsche advocates his 'higher' 'artistic' individuals to engage in aesthetic self-transfiguration, which leads them via a process of habituation to transfigure the framework of their experience by simultaneously reconceptualising and re-evaluating the details of their life (thereby, ideally, re-orientating their affects so that they celebrate their 'necessities' in relation to the world.)

I have also highlighted how, following Reginster, this process requires an individual to have a bold, proactive, artistic approach to life where they not only affirm and embrace life honestly, but also engage in it in a more *active* sense, by positively desiring to take on its challenges, even to the point of 'seek[ing] out suffering' (*TI* IX, 24).

However, I contend, it is not sufficient to leave this notion of *greater* engagement as it stands in Reginster's account. Because to appreciate it fully, we need to consider *how* Nietzsche suggests the ideal individual should *actively* engage more with their life. He proposes that they do this *as a kind of 'artist'*, who participates in a holistic artistic process, which enables them to draw from their experiences as part of an exploratory process to greater self-understanding and self-formation.

For, as I will now illustrate, in Nietzsche's view, this process represents a kind of *artistic*, wholly-embodied, multi-perspectival exploration of one's experiences over a 'lived life', where the attainment of multiple perspectives may lead not only to greater understanding (and as such, when done well,[49] could supplement the work done by natural science), but also to greater self-formation.

2.1 Phenomenal exploration

This idea is hinted at if we first consider that Nietzsche often seems to favour a kind of artistic interaction with the world. For example, he valorises 'artists' who deal with the 'surface' of things and he suggests that his rare ingroup, as 'artists', are 'worshippers' of 'shapes, tones, words' (*GS*(2) Preface, 4).

While it may seem that these 'artists' are embracing life *less* by resorting to 'mere' 'superficial' appearance (as he suggests elsewhere; e.g. *WTP* III, 852), with further investigation it seems that, for Nietzsche, *in this context*, an artistic exploration of one's life – where one, for example, seeks new perspectives by freely embracing one's feelings, motivations, sensory experiences, and conceptual ideas

[49] This is exemplified by his ideal artists in 'Where I Admire' in *CW* who explore the nature of their experiences, unimpeded by their own 'vanity'.

– is actually a more 'truthful' way of interacting with the world than if one were to follow an 'objective', scientific approach (which is not possible).

This approach is also reflected in his attitude towards science at the time. For, although in some of his later work Nietzsche links science with falsification,[50] in *The Antichrist* and *Twilight of the Idols* (e.g. *A* 47; *TI* III, 3) he instead chooses to praise science for being based on the senses and empirical evidence.[51] Thus, while this does not represent a growing enthusiasm for science in his later works (as Nietzsche also had major reservations about its practice, criticising it, for example, for being life-denying and driven by unhealthy hidden motivations such as the ascetic ideal; e.g *GM* III, 24–26), his positive remarks appear to derive from the fact that he suggests that *empirically*-based investigations offer the *only* real access to reality (Leiter 1993, 337) and we are not warranted to make any 'metaphysical'-type claims (e.g. *TI* 111, 3). (Thus, the mature Nietzsche advocates empirically-warranted investigation based on senses and naturalistic claims, such as the ones he makes in his genealogy.)

This outlook is also reflected in Nietzsche's comment that the distinction between the 'true world' and the arena of 'appearance' is not clear. For he suggests at *TI* III, 6, that 'appearance' does not necessarily mean something superficial that is somehow less than reality: 'Because "appearance" here means reality once again, only selected, strengthened, corrected'.

This idea is also reinforced when we consider Nietzsche's progression of thought (Leiter 1993, 335). Early on, he accepted the 'metaphysical correspondence theory… of truth as correspondence to the thing-in-itself' (Clark 1990, 22), and then 'under the influence of Schopenhauer', he accepted the falsification thesis, i.e. that we 'can have no knowledge of things-in-themselves'. However, subsequently, in the 1880s, he gave up on the idea of a true world beyond our experience of reality, and finally, in his later works, after the *GM*, Nietzsche rejected Kant's falsification thesis. So, in his view, this left behind only 'appearance' and our direct interaction with the world as the true commerce of our 'knowledge'.

Additionally, this approach is reinforced by the fact that Nietzsche repudiates any metaphysical philosophical investigation which contemplates 'the unchanging and eternal' as opposed to the 'fleeting and transitory' (Schuringa 2012, 416). As Schuringa notes, Nietzsche valorises Heraclitus for challenging Parmenides' approach of looking for 'the true nature of things behind the world, [by] positing… [an unfounded] stable realm of "being"' to explain 'becoming'. By contrast, Heraclitus suggested 'the nature of the world consists not in some grounding element… but in the conflictual play of the apparent world itself' (ibid). Thus, 'Heraclitus' key insight was that we should not look behind

[50] For example, in *BGE* 24 Nietzsche says science holds us in a 'suitably falsified world'. See also *BGE* 4 and *GS* 107-111.
[51] In *HH*, he also expresses a strong respect for a 'strict' scientific method (e.g. *HH 3*,16).

the realm of flux for a "true" [explanatory and stable] world'. Instead, 'we should accept the flux itself, in its ever-changing forms, as our object of investigation' (ibid).

As such, Nietzsche's endorsement of an 'artistic' exploration of one's life takes this kind of warranted empirical phenomenal investigation to its full, advocating one that involves considering all the elements which comprise immediate experience, including 'reason, sensibility, feeling, will' (*TI* IX,49).

2.2 Multiple perspectives claim

Additionally, according to Nietzsche's multiple perspectives claim, the act of seeking new and multiple perspectives is the most effective means to gain a greater depth of understanding, which is arguably something that artists are accomplished at doing. To clarify this idea, it is first important to understand that, in Nietzsche's view, humans are made up of sub-personal elements or 'drives'[52] (which primarily work on a subconscious level), and every drive has a 'perspective' since each one intrinsically values things (e.g. a hunger drive values food). Each drive places importance on what it wants, which in turn conditions how it 'views' the world:

> *'"Perspectivism". It is our needs that interpret the world: our drives and their for and against. Every drive is a kind of attempt to dominate; each has its own perspective, which it wants to force as a norm on the other drives.'* (*KSA* 12:315)

This also explains why drives are constantly in competition, as every drive wants to 'dominate' and flourish, even at the expense of the others. For 'all happening in the organic world is an over-powering, a becoming-lord-over …' (*GM* II, 6).

Thus, our drives are intrinsically linked with our values and perspectives, as they instil our outlook with a value-laden perspective (May 1999, 9). Moreover, according to Nietzsche, by exploring multiple, different perspectives (thus giving more varied expression to different drives), we can deepen our understanding of something. We can think of this process much in the same way as we might look at a house from every angle, walking around it and inside it, in every room. We are likely to know more about the house via this method than if we were to stand still and look at it from a single, fixed viewpoint (Leiter 1993, 344). Similarly, for Nietzsche, 'truth'[53] is 'multiple' (Janaway 2014, 55); and it is only by engaging and multiplying as many of one's affects as possible that one can increase one's depth of 'knowledge'.

[52] See Katsafanas (2012, 1, n.2) for a definition of 'drive'.
[53] See n.6.

> *'the capacity to have one's pro and contra in one's power, and to shift them in and out: so that one knows how to make precisely the difference in perspectives and affective useful for knowledge... the more affects we allow to speak about a matter, the more eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more complete will our 'concept' of this matter, our 'objectivity' be.' (GM III,12)*

Consequently, we can see how an artist may be considered as accomplished in embracing multiple perspectives, thereby achieving greater 'understanding' (and exploring new evaluations), as we often associate artists with pushing boundaries and opening our eyes to new perspectives.

2.3 Utilising affects

Continuing on from Nietzsche's claim that we cannot escape our partial, perspectival, needs-based outlook, he suggests that one should acknowledge this and embrace one's affects and personal journey in a kind of artistic manner (as opposed to trying to attain a kind of scientific, 'objective' view on life which is not possible).[54] For example, we can see this in Nietzsche's admiration of Goethe for his 'passionate' involvement in his work throughout his life (*D* 481). Nietzsche also encouraged such personal involvement in other arenas such as in the practice of philosophy. For example, he suggests that the ideal philosopher realises that detached, objective, scientific 'knowledge' is not possible. Therefore, philosophers do not deceive themselves but instead recognise that their own personality traits and perspectives are embedded in their own philosophies (e.g. *BGE* 6). By embracing this stance, and constantly drawing from their own experiences, they give their work greater depth.

Nietzsche illustrates this point in *Daybreak*:

> *'If you compare Kant and Schopenhauer with Plato, Spinoza, Pascal, Rousseau, Goethe in respect of their soul and not of their mind, then the former are at a disadvantage: their thoughts do not constitute a passionate history of a soul; there is nothing here that would make a novel, no crises, catastrophes or death-scenes; their thinking is not at the same time an involuntary biography of a soul but, in the case of Kant, the biography of a head, in the case of Schopenhauer, the description and mirroring of a character ("that which is unalterable") and pleasure in the "mirror" itself, that is to say, in an excellent intellect. When he does shine through his thoughts, Kant appears honest and honourable in the best sense, but insignificant: he lacks breadth and power; he has not experienced very much, and his manner of working deprives him of the time in which to experience things – I am thinking, of course, not of crude "events" impinging from without, but of the vicissitudes and convulsions which befall the most*

[54] Nietzsche mocks 'realists' for thinking that they can do such a thing (*GS* 57).

> *solitary and quietest life which possesses leisure and burns with the passion of thinking. Schopenhauer has one advantage over him: he at least possesses a certain vehement ugliness in hatred, desire, vanity, mistrust; his disposition is somewhat more ferocious and he had time and leisure for this ferocity. But he lacked "development": just as development is lacking in the domain of his ideas; he had no "history".* (*D* 481)

Here, Nietzsche suggests that philosophical works can be influenced by their authors in two ways. Firstly, they are affected by their 'character', and its depth, which is perhaps reflected in Nietzsche's observation that:

> *'The lack of personality always takes its revenge: A weakened, thin, extinguished personality, one that denies itself and its own existence, is no longer good for anything good – least of all philosophy.' (GS 345)*

Secondly, the quality of a work can be influenced by an author's experience in life, or lack of it. For Nietzsche seems to propose in *D* 481 that if a philosopher somehow lacks experience and personal development, this will be detrimental to their work. We can see this in his claim that Kant's work lacks 'breadth and power; he has not experienced very much'. In addition, Nietzsche reinforces this claim in his valorisation of Goethe for having lived to the full.[55] It seems that, in Nietzsche's view, that personal experience can be a useful tool in assisting in the endeavour of broadening one's knowledge in the practice of philosophy.

The idea that one should embrace and develop one's own feelings in the search for greater understanding can also be strengthened when one considers that, in Nietzsche's view, one can actually utilise one's perspectives to make the acquisition of knowledge possible (contrary to the notion that Nietzsche's perspectivism may jeopardise its feasibility). For example, according to Janaway (2009, 52),[56] Nietzsche indicates that one needs perspectives because 'to disconnect the affects' would mean to disable knowledge. Janaway illustrates this idea by noting how we utilise our 'imaginative engagement' in order to work out 'our own ambivalent inclinations' which then gives us the capacity 'to reconstruct the history of [moral] attitudes' and understand them (ibid, 53). This also emphasises the active position of the interpreter in the way in which knowledge is acquired.

We can see how Nietzsche's recommendation that one should develop a 'passionate history' of the soul' by constantly exploring one's affects and gaining new experience also fits in with his multiple perspectives claim. For it suggests that the more perspectives one has, the closer one will get to understanding with greater perspective. Thus, Janaway (2014, 55–56) remarks: 'Artists seem to be adept at doing what all seekers after improved understanding would need to do anyway, namely engaging

[55] E.g. *CW*,'We Antipodes'.
[56] Cf. Richardson 2001,19.

their diverse feelings, finding new interpretations, and moving between them. Hence gaining truth about oneself would in the end be a skilful process of selecting, simplifying, seeing from a distance and so on. Selecting and simplifying our view of ourselves is something we must do anyway: artists are simply experts at doing so. In that case what we gain from all the artistic distorting and styling Nietzsche recommends is, after all, a better insight into the truth'.

2.3.1 Greater perspective, greater life-flourishing

We can also begin to see from this account that Nietzsche advocates this kind of exploration of one's perspectives of one's life, not only because it helps an individual to develop greater 'understanding', but also because it is linked with self-development and greater life-flourishing, that is for those who are capable and not crushed by it. Because, in his view, the more perspectives one explores, the more drives one gives greater expression to and the greater one's levels of life-enhancement.

According to Nietzsche, not only does the 'highest', most life-enhancing individual have an integrated hierarchy of drives aligned around their own set of determined drives, but their constitution is notable for the amount of drives it contains and the strength of expression that these drives exert. In short, they are giving maximum expression to the richest set of drives. This means that the 'higher' the individual is, the more perspectives they have, i.e. having a richer set of drives from which to draw makes them more 'alive'. (Yet, it is worth recalling that Nietzsche also suggests that since this kind of person would have more drives to attend to and more requirements in order to 'flourish', it is actually harder for them to keep functioning well) (May 1999, 85f).

In this way, Nietzsche often seems to measure the strength or capability of someone by their amount of 'seeing and learning about brute reality' (May 2009, 95 n.20). For he 'clearly sees it as vital to the development of the sovereign individual. But such a mass of learning and clear-seeing can crush, unless it is structured by thought (and/or counterbalanced by art)'. For example, he suggests as a consequence, Wagner had 'to control this mass of experience and knowledge by an even firmer "arch of thought", so that it "did not stifle his will to action" or "entice him aside"' (ibid).

However, it is important to remember, in the case of aesthetic transfiguration and all endeavours for Nietzsche, an individual's search for new perspectives and 'knowing' ideally needs to have a 'life-affirming' outcome (complementing their *own* traits and in their own context). As a result, I propose, this kind of process is similar to a creative artistic process in two crucial ways:

- Firstly, the ideal individual must constantly seek new perspectives, challenge norms and push things forward: '*He who has to be creator always has to destroy!*' (*Z* C136).
- But secondly, they must combine this with the search and promotion of their *own* standards and values.

Came (2014, 137) notes that this picture is reflected in Nietzsche's ideal creator who is 'unique' and distinct from the 'herd' and the 'poison-drinkers'. Exemplified by the *Übermensch* in *Zarathustra*, he 'invents himself by rejecting through sheer force of will, the values of many and then – much more difficult – by finding the values by which *he as an individual may flourish*, and living up to them…' (ibid). 'But in creating new values, he undermines those that he initially rejected. Many powerful acts of ethical creativity will *destroy* those old values, the values once constitutive of "morality" itself, altogether' (ibid).

This is because, 'in Nietzsche's ethical universe, creativity operates much as it does in the more familiar world of the arts'. For an 'individual artist who rejects the prevailing conventions and produces an original and successful work thereby creates a new set of standards'. So, 'his success arises from the deliberate disavowal of some artistic norm', thereby weakening 'the authority of that norm' (ibid,137–38).

(Thus, while the ideal individual does not have a kind of conscious 'metaphysical' free will (Nietzsche repudiates this kind of notion), at the same time, I suggest, they must be endowed with some kind of self-alignment or self-motivational weight in order to be able to 'engage' in this process (as mentioned in 1.3).)

2.4 Multi-layered exploration of life

As is now becoming clearer, I am developing an argument which highlights that, in Nietzsche's view, in order to deepen one's understanding of one's self and life, and simultaneously improve one's evaluative situation (so that it is complementary to one's own development), ideally one must interact with the world over one's life in a kind of artistic, multi-perspectival, exploratory way.

In my view, this idea is also supported if we consider that Nietzsche revered Goethe for his ability to strive 'against the separation of reason, sensibility, feeling, will', which he suggests played a part in helping to 'discipline… himself to wholeness.'

> *'What he wanted was totality; he fought against the separation of reason, sensibility, feeling, will (- preached in the most forbiddingly scholastic way by Kant, Goethe's antipode), he disciplined himself to wholeness, he created himself…'* (*TI* IX,49)

The idea that Goethe strove against the 'separation' of these elements for this objective indicates to me that, in Nietzsche's view, he was able somehow to develop himself by not focussing primarily or excessively on his 'rational', conscious, conceptual thought (i.e. being driven by his conscious 'reasons') which others have done – and as a result have been 'led astray about the nature of knowledge' (*GS* 333). For Goethe also did this by drawing on all the ways in which we interact with the world, that is to say, also via 'sensibility, feeling, will' and 'fighting against their separation'. Thus, he interacted with the world via all these elements in an interconnected, artistic way, recognising that one factor may influence another.

The idea that it is important to recognise that the elements of 'reason, sensibility, feeling, will' are essentially interconnected is reflected elsewhere in Nietzsche's work. For example, one can see it in his idea that one should not seek to separate these elements out and attain a kind of rational 'objective' perspective, since this is impossible. Rather, one should embrace one's owns feelings and perspectives as part of one's passionate 'history of the soul' (as discussed in section 2.3). It is also reinforced when he proposes, for example, that 'all sense perceptions are wholly permeated with value-judgements' (*KSA* 12, 2 [95]), and when he suggests that, in order to promote the chances of a 'revaluation of values', we need to learn to 'think differently' so that we can 'feel differently' (*D* 103). For it will be a long, drawn-out process with many stages.

In view of this, it seems that in order to explore this kind of interplay between these different elements (i.e. of reasons, senses, feeling, and willing),[57] and to see how it affects our evaluative stance, we need to investigate them *in concert* so as to draw out further new perspectives. I suggest that this kind of process can be paralleled with the way in which an artist may explore things in their work. For example, the artist Hockney commented that: 'In art, new ways of seeing mean new ways of feeling; you can't divorce the two…' (Artnet 2017), which gives an effective example of how one can broaden the way one sees and evaluates the world via an interconnected artistic process.[58]

As such, I propose that Nietzsche, via his account of Goethe, is presenting another kind of artistic technique which can help one to gain greater insight and perspective by utilising the various ways that one interacts with the world in combination. This idea is also fitting when we consider that for Nietzsche consciousness is deficient as the 'weakest and most fallible organ' (*GM* II, 16) and the 'last link in the chain' (*KSA* 12, 1 [61]; *WLN* 60) and therefore is, in some sense, secondary.[59]

Accordingly, we should recognise that we are interacting with the world across all these interlinked elements (driven by underlying layers of complexity that we cannot comprehend); and, correspondingly, we also develop in this way as a wholly embodied, 'total' organism, the totality of

[57] For these fundamentally represent the underlying battle of drives.
[58] Cf. 'elastic thinking' (Mlodinow 2018).
[59] This is persuasive when we consider that, as evolving organisms, our sensory brain is likely to have developed first to help us navigate the world before conscious, conceptual, abstract thought came into play.

which determines our actions (Katsafanas 2015, 13f). As noted earlier, 'rather than attributing actions to discrete causes, we should see them as emanations from the "total state" of our mental economy. Conscious decisions, thoughts and motives are one part of this total state, but only a small part' (ibid, 17).

So, while it is important at times to utilise our conscious skills, such as when we use empirical techniques (as in the case of empirically warranted truth-seeking in genealogy), our conscious thoughts do not have the sole *primary* position that they are often thought to have. Ideally, to try to tease out our 'truths' (e.g. about ourselves and values), we should use all the elements in this kind of artistic interconnected way.

This idea also fits in with Nietzsche's special scientific ideal of *Fröhlichkeit* (Anderson and Cristy 2017, 1531), which I discussed earlier in relation to the aesthetic transfigurative process. Here Nietzsche suggests that an effective way for us to explore life, and to achieve shifts in perspectives and evaluations, is to do so in a way that combines an exploration of life with an artistic sensibility.

It also seems persuasive to suggest that a kind of scientific exploration which simultaneously embraces artistic sensibility (along these lines) can be effective when we consider Nietzsche's claim that some underlying motivations are too subtle for our own conscious thought to grasp.[60] Therefore, if we want to try to detect them (if we can access them at all), we need another way of doing so – and perhaps the freedom of this kind of phenomenally-interconnected exploration would allow us to explore them without conceptual limitations.[61]

Thus, I suggest the ideal individual who investigates life in this way can represent Nietzsche's ideal philosopher, who is an 'experimenter' of life (e.g. *BGE* 42; *GS* 324),[62] who views 'life as a means to knowledge', but, crucially, they explore it in a wholly embodied and therefor more honest way.

2.4.1 The journey to self-development occurs primarily below the level of consciousness

There is further evidence to suggest that, in Nietzsche's view, one can bring about greater self-understanding and develop in this way, via this kind of multiplatform, interconnected exploration of one's life, when we consider his argument that we can help to develop ourselves by activating one's drives, ideally by 'living dangerously' (*GS* 283). This idea seems to indicate that one can develop in a

[60] This is because we are held back by the limitations of our conceptual thought. Nietzsche also suggests self-conscious reflection is limited, because even though 'unconscious states and processes have definite, structured content, this content is articulated in a non-conceptual form'; whereas conscious states are 'linguistically or conceptually articulated' (Katsafanas 2015,14). As such, when unconscious states become self-conscious and their 'content is translated into a conceptual form', this means that they are not necessarily accurate as 'the very way in which we become conscious of mental activities is constrained by our linguistic and conceptual resources.'

[61] For, if we do not have a concept of a motivation, it is less likely that we can detect it (Katsafanas 2015,14).

[62] Anderson and Cristy 2017,1531.

primarily subconscious way, by provoking one's underlying drives into action before it becomes evident as a formalised understanding in conscious thought (May 1999, 190f).

For example, May (1999, 190–91) proposes that, according to Nietzsche, one's attainment of '*complex* knowledge' in relation to ethical matters (i.e. life-enhancing conditions for oneself) comes in a 'three-stage emotional development in which rival "instincts" develop separately, then clash, and finally (though rarely) reach an accommodation'. For Nietzsche suggests that this comes about when 'all these impulses can assert and maintain themselves in existence and each can finally feel it is in the right vis-a-vis all the others' (*GS* 333). Therefore, a kind of settled agreement is attained between one's dominant instincts, each of which has its own perspectives and needs. However, Nietzsche notes:

> *'Since only the last scenes of reconciliation and the final accounting at the end of this long process rise to our consciousness, we suppose that intelligere must be something conciliatory, just, and good-something… essentially opposed to the instincts, when it is actually nothing but a certain behaviour of the instincts toward one another.'(GS 333)*

Thus, May (1999, 191) observes that '[u]nderstanding, far from being distinct from the emotions or demanding their suppression, is structured by a certain order in the emotional economy'. The first two stages, which are unconscious, require a degree of 'living dangerously' in order to bring 'the agent into proximity to reality, and by arousing her instincts to life and battle'.

This illustrates how, by 'living dangerously', we can effectively activate our responses and instincts, which in turn helps one to develop over one's life (and the more perspectives one utilises, the more one is 'maximally alive').

Consequently, the idea – namely, that an ideal individual can somehow develop on a subconscious level in this way, which only surfaces to understanding when a kind of 'order' has been found – also effectively illustrates why, in Nietzsche's view, this process of gaining greater 'understanding' equates to greater selfhood, as it essentially relates to when the expression of the drives has found some kind of harmony as part of one's emotional 'economy' (and thus when a person has begun to 'discipline' themselves to 'wholeness').

Yet, I suggest that it also seems plausible that, according to Nietzsche's account, one could, in some sense, help to reveal and subsequently promote one's own characteristics in a different way via 'living dangerously'. For it may also enable one to become more *consciously* aware of one's highest values when one activates one's drives. For example, if an individual's life or possessions are under threat, this incident may awaken them to what is important to them. Perhaps their house is on fire. They may use the last moment to dive in and rescue something. Thus, this may not only help them to realise how

important something is to them, but also what they are capable of doing when required.[63] This realisation may then enable them to give their highest values even greater motivational weight via conscious affirmation post the event. I therefore propose that, by awakening one's battle-like responses by way of 'living dangerously', one may be able to consciously 'feel' the nature of oneself more, and help to promote greater self-formation. And so, it seems, sometimes the process of self-formation could be enhanced (for certain individuals) by a kind of interplay between subconscious and conscious elements.

(I will explore this further in sections 3 and 4, but here we might consider how we can apply this kind of process to the recognition of more subtle feelings of 'appropriateness' about ourselves. It might be similar to the way in which when a musician begins to master an instrument, they become able to recognise when something 'feels' right for them. Thus, this analogy could hint at what Nietzschean 'wholeness' or 'selfhood' may feel like, and how it could potentially be developed. In this way, one might experience the development of one's sense of selfhood in the way a great artist or musician may experience their own mastery, developing on multiple levels over time, where they achieve 'not just the command that enables [them] … to achieve speed, precision, evenness and rich tonal variety, but also the command – at once over body, emotion, sensibility and conception – that enables his musical values and the *Weltanschauung* that they in turn embody, to be expressed in his playing' (May 2009, 90–91).)

However, the idea that one will develop when a kind of harmony has been achieved in one's underlying processes perhaps also explains why Nietzsche suggests that the ideal individual can be kept going by the faith 'that all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole' (*TI* IX, 49), i.e. the person that they become. For I suggest, this refers to the fact that, while an individual is unable to direct this process consciously, they can have 'faith' to sustain themselves along the way that *all* they can do to improve their chances of self-formation is embrace this kind of '*blind*' and yet purposeful process, as it will only happen over time as they develop, as their total organisation gains greater coherence.

Nevertheless, Nietzsche emphasises that this *ongoing* process of 'living dangerously' is far from easy. Indeed, it requires a great deal of strength and self-discipline 'to become what we are', as we must test 'the highways, and byways of experience, and strengthening ourselves through great suffering and exposure to terrible truths' (May 1999, 110–11). This also highlights why, for Nietzsche, 'suffering' can have a positive effect on our creative transformation. For, although creating is the 'great redemption from suffering', to be a creator 'requires suffering and much transformation' (*Z* II, 2).

Yet, this is not to say that an ideal, unified kind of individual will ever achieve a comfortable, final, settled state, because, in Nietzsche's view, it is an ongoing process that thrives on inner conflict for a number of reasons. For example, one's underlying drives, by their very nature, will be constantly

[63] However, it seems this kind of situation could also generate negative revelations.

striving to prevail over others. Moreover, the affirmation of drives ideally at some point leads to one overcoming them.[64]

2.4.2 Maintaining an internally-opposed creative state

Nietzsche also stresses that a kind of productive tension is necessary for self-formation, as opposed to a settled state. He claims that a continual opposition or transformation of 'lower' values within an individual is needed in the process of self-overcoming. This, May notes, demonstrates that Nietzsche is not 'advocating a total yea-saying, a sort of Woodstock of the psychic or social economy' (1999, 87); rather, he is calling for a more complex, creative, internally opposed state.[65] For example, Nietzsche does not just portray self-overcoming as a straightforward achievement whereby one is able to affirm the maximum amount of one's drives solely by 'forging a whole out of a multiplicity of drives' (ibid, 58). But it seems that Nietzsche's ideal individual, in order to self-overcome, needs to foster a continually 'active opposition to a lower value or state – which must be destroyed, transformed or co-opted by the higher'. Thus, for Nietzsche, not only is this state of internal opposition valuable in that the 'higher' state or value can overcome the 'lower' one, but also, by putting someone in this state of tension, they become 'maximally alive'. As May writes: 'there is something life-enhancing about stretching a soul across a gradient of opposed values…the steeper the gradient(s) – i.e. the more pronounced the opposition(s) – that an individual can tolerate, the more self-overcoming will be necessary, and the more fully and creatively he can live.' (1999, 85)

As such, Nietzsche is calling for the ideal individual to be in a continual state of internal opposition, where he is perpetually seeking to 'maintain' and intensify a 'crucial opposition of values' (ibid, 86) – and this will create a fertile ground for creative thinking.[66] So, while Nietzsche calls for the ideal man to have a unified, hierarchically ordered self, at the same time this is balanced with the management of a proliferation of opposing affects. As a result, this process resembles an artistic one which is not just about simple 'yea-saying', but instead is one of constant creative tension and evolution.

The importance of continual opposition, destruction or transformation is also reflected in how Nietzsche suggests that ideal individuals must undergo numerous transformations – or 'deaths' and 'rebirths' – in their life, where they continually work to overcome and destroy unhealthy values and avoid stagnation.

[64] This is effectively demonstrated by Nietzsche's suggestion that the will to truth will eventually undermine itself (May 1999,24).
[65] They also need to balance this with external pressures from, for example, life-denying values perpetuated by a society's 'morality' or one's life experiences.
[66] Thus, this ideal can never be achieved, since, if everything is overcome, the ideal man would lose his creative power.

'Yes, much bitter dying must there be in your lives, you creators! Thus, are you advocates and justifiers of all impermanence'. (Z II,2)

'Verily, through a hundred souls I have gone my way and through a hundred cradles and pangs of birth'. (ibid)

This reinforces why, ideally, one must continually try to embrace this kind of artistic exploratory process over one's life for greater life-enhancement, so one can promote one's chances of 'deaths' and 'rebirths'.

2.5 Strength to 'keep' oneself 'in check'

Nietzsche attributes Goethe's ability to 'discipline himself to wholeness' to the fact that he also had some kind of *strength* which allowed him to embrace his passions and yet 'keep himself in check':

'Goethe conceived of a strong, highly educated, self-respecting human being, skilled in all things physical and able to keep himself in check, who could dare to allow himself the entire expanse and wealth of naturalness, who is strong enough for this freedom; a person who is tolerant out of strength and not weakness because he knows how to take advantage of things that would destroy an average nature; a person lacking all prohibitions except for weakness, whether it is called a vice or a virtue... A spirit like this who has become free stands in the middle of the world with a cheerful and trusting fatalism in the belief that only the individual is reprehensible, that everything is redeemed and affirmed in the whole -he does not negate any more... But a belief like this is the highest of all possible beliefs: I have christened it with the name Dionysus.' (*TI IX,49)*

From this, I argue, we can read that, in Nietzsche's view, Goethe's strength, in this context, must have come from a number of different capabilities:

- Firstly, he must have had some kind of self-insight to be able to 'keep *himself* in check'.
- Secondly, he had a kind of self-discipline and self-control to manage his conflicting *internal* battles, so that he could 'allow himself the *entire* expanse and wealth of naturalness'.
- Thirdly, he must have had sufficient strength to manage himself in the face of *external* pressures so that he could overcome any resistance to his own development and be 'strong enough for this freedom'.[67]

[67] This kind of quality fits in with how Nietzsche also seems to measure a person's strength by how well they can endure and essentially overcome resistance or hardship. In his notebooks, Nietzsche claims he judged 'the power of a will by how much resistance, pain, torture it endures and knows how to turn to its… advantage' (*WP*§382), and that 'all expansion,

Thus, his ability to manage his proliferation of affects enabled him 'to employ to his advantage what would destroy an average nature'. Such a view shows how, according to Nietzsche, while Goethe was a passionate man with strong drives, he could not simply embrace his passions in an impulsive, rash or hedonistic way; instead it required great self-control and, at times, the need to restrain his desires and emotions.

Nietzsche's admiration for this kind of self-restraint is also evident elsewhere. For example, he seems to valorise those who are able 'not to react immediately to a stimulus, but to have the restraining, stock-taking instincts in one's control' (*TI*, 'What the Germans lack', 6). In *BGE* 188, he states that what is 'essential and invaluable about every morality is that it is a long constraint' which is as valuable as the 'tyranny of rhyme and rhythm'. Also, he suggests that any individuals who regard this kind of constraint as an 'obsequious submission to arbitrary laws' are misled if they falsely believe they are '"free", even free-spirited' (ibid).

In contrast, because Goethe, in Nietzsche's view, was strong enough in this way, to manage his own internal conflicts in the face of external pressures, this enabled him to remain as true to *himself* as possible. Thus, Nietzsche valorised Goethe for forging his own 'path' (*D* 222).

May (2009, 91) effectively encapsulates what must be involved in this kind of process. For he notes it: 'takes a great deal of *hard work* to "promise oneself" in respect of, or to stand surety for, the aims and valuations that one's self embodies and legislates at any given time in one's life…because those aims and valuations themselves evolve or are discovered in the process of living life, especially a life of experiment and risk, in which danger is not shunned. Such a person gets to know what he wants and needs in order to flourish – and is conscious of possessing the *strength and discipline* to do what it takes to fulfil those needs and wants.'

May continues: 'Though the evolution of hierarchy demands ceaseless practice – the practice of commanding and obeying within oneself, the constant search for freedom *through discipline* – the attainment of its overall direction cannot be forced. It will take its own time, and depends on the emergence of what Nietzsche variously calls our innate "organising "idea"" (*EH* II,9)'(ibid 92).

This need for strength and self-discipline, which helps one to be true to one's 'path' in the face of internal and external tensions, can also be seen in other 'highest' types of individuals that Nietzsche identifies, who are not artists in the 'ordinary' sense of the term. (However, they could be considered artists in the Nietzschean sense of 'form creators', as creators of states, for example.)

incorporation, growth means striving against something that resists' (ibid, §704). From this Reginster (2006, 126) also defines Nietzsche's notion of the 'will-to-power' as 'the will to overcome resistance'. Consequently, we can see how Goethe was an ideal kind of individual because he was able to overcome external pressures and hardships that might have prevented him from becoming his more unified self.

For instance, Stern, in his article '*Nietzsche, Freedom, and Writing Lives'* (2009), identifies this kind of ability to manage a 'productive' inner tension as a unifying feature of Nietzsche's highest types of individuals – such as 'Caesar, the free man, [who] combines the inner conflict with… outward mastery' (ibid, 98). As part of his discussion, Stern compares Nietzsche's account of three different individuals – namely, Catiline, Napoleon, and Caesar – who have a similar 'starting point' in that they all have 'unusual strength' and are too strong for their time. They also have an unusual 'unity of instinct' (ibid, 94). However, as their lives develop from this starting point, they turn out very differently.

Nietzsche claims, for example, that Catiline was essentially 'destroyed by his own strength' (ibid) because he was 'punished by society' for being too strong (ibid, 96). Consequently, he began to 'mistrust and turn against himself' (ibid) and his own inner conflict crushed him.[68] Yet, unlike Catiline, Napoleon was 'very much stronger than those around him' (ibid, 97) and used 'his strength to dominate' them (ibid, 94). However, Nietzsche valorises Caesar for being the highest kind, as the 'free' man, because he somehow managed to successfully combine 'inner conflict with the outward mastery'. It seems that Nietzsche does not revere Napoleon in this way, because Napoleon did not have to deal with inner conflict.

Stern notes that Caesar 'suffered' in the same way as Catiline, because he had such strong instincts, which also caused him to 'mistrust and turn against himself' (ibid, 99). However, although Caesar was 'internally unstable', he managed, unlike Catiline, to avoid 'physiological degeneration and decadence' by expending 'all his effort to maintain control of himself', and thus he was 'free because he (just) manages' (ibid).

Thus, Stern notes that, in Nietzsche's view, freedom is the 'feeling one has when one is struggling and fighting for something' (ibid, 100). He also illustrates this point by highlighting that liberals are essentially 'free' when they are fighting for their own political standpoint (ibid, 99–100). However, 'once in power they undermine the productive tension between individuals by claiming that everyone is equal; hence they lose the freedom they had while fighting'. I would suggest that this feeling of 'freedom' also seems to call to mind the feeling of freedom and of one*self* (discussed earlier) that emerges when one 'activates' the *fighting*, 'war-like' responses in one's determined drives by 'living dangerously'.

[68] Stern's discussion also illustrates how history can deal with people very differently 'if you have the misfortune to lose rather than win'. For if Catiline had been successful in his endeavours, in the way Caesar had, perhaps the outcome would have been different (ibid, 94-95).

2.5.1 A particular kind of higher individual as an 'artist'

While Nietzsche reveres higher types like Caesar, I propose that the kind of 'higher' individual that we have been focussing on in this thesis is of a different and specific kind. This is indicated by the fact that Nietzsche seems to identify them as a kind of 'artist', and suggests that they have the capacity to be actively involved in their own transfiguration and 'self-cultivation'. For instance, he notes how Goethe 'created himself' (*TI* IX,49). Also Nietzsche seems to count himself as one of these people, too. (In section 4, I will draw some of these features together to build a fuller, more complete picture of the kind of process that Nietzsche suggests his fellow ingroup of 'artists' should live by.)

Section 3 Knowers with the ability to not know

I would now like to consider another way in which, according to Nietzsche, certain ideal individuals, as 'artists', should interact with the world by being good at 'not knowing' at the right time. An example of this can be found in the following passage in which Nietzsche addresses a certain ingroup of 'higher' 'artistic' individuals (which therefore includes himself) – whom he also refers to as 'convalescents' and 'knowing ones.' And he suggests that, as 'artists', they should have learnt two particular capabilities, namely, that of 'cheerfulness' and being 'good at not knowing':

> *'No, if we convalescents still need art, it is another kind of art - a mocking, light, fleeting, divinely untroubled, divinely artificial art that, like a bright flame, blazes into an unclouded sky! Above all: an art for artists, only for artists! In addition we will know better afterwards what is first and foremost needed for that: cheerfulness -any cheerfulness, my friends! ... There are some things we now know too well, we knowing ones: oh, how we nowadays learn as artists to forget well, to be good at not knowing!' (GS*(2) Preface, 4)[69]

We have already touched on what this kind of 'cheerfulness' amounts to in section 1.7[70] and here I will focus on the second element of 'not knowing'. On the face of it, one might take this as a straightforward proposal, suggesting that ideally an individual should simply try to not place any importance on attaining knowledge. Yet, one should consider the fact that later in this passage Nietzsche refers to these artists as 'knowers' and notes they are 'daredevils of the spirit who have climbed the highest and most dangerous peak of current thought and looked around from up there, looked down from up there'.[71] It is also worth recalling his reverence for individuals who can face 'brutal' truths. Thus, these aspects suggest that these 'convalescents' have already sought and achieved great depths of 'knowledge'. And they have learnt *from* their intrepid explorations, and *from* the nature of 'knowing', the importance of the ability to 'not know'. Consequently, it seems that there is more to this claim than first meets the eye.

As they are 'knowers', this also indicates the need for 'knowing' and 'not knowing' *at the right time*, and there are numerous references which this support this. For example, this idea of the need to balance 'knowing' with 'not knowing' (or forgetting 'well') could in part refer to Nietzsche's progression of thought in relation to what 'knowledge' we can feasibly obtain of the world (discussed in section 2.1). As noted, he gave up on the idea of a true world beyond our experience of reality, followed by Kant's falsification thesis, thus leaving behind only appearance and our direct interaction with the world as the true commerce of our 'knowledge'. Therefore, if read in this sense, it could be suggested that these

[69] Nietzsche reused this text in his 'Epilogue' for *CW*, signalling its importance.
[70] This seems to be a trained kind of second-nature and one way to achieve life-affirmation.
[71] Nietzsche also seems to be referring to his ideal kind of philosophy here, which is only for the 'strong' who can endure hard truths, and is only revealed from the 'highest peaks', calling to mind his own mountain treks.

'knowers' recognise that one can never completely 'know' something in the sense of a metaphysical 'thing-in-itself'[72] and one's 'knowledge' is restricted to 'appearance'. Thus, they must 'forget' to try to 'know' in the former sense. This is perhaps further supported by the fact that Nietzsche also refers to this notion later in the same passage when he suggests that, as 'artists', they must be '*worshippers of shapes, tones, words*', as well as his comment that: '*Those Greeks were superficial – out of profundity*' (i.e. they realised that our 'superficial' phenomenal interaction with the world is our only form of 'knowledge').

The need to balance 'knowing' with 'not knowing' could also refer to Nietzsche's multiple perspectives claim (discussed in section 2.2), which suggests that, while our perspectives are always partial, perspectival, and needs-based, we can obtain a greater perspective by utilising as many perspectives as possible. However, at the same time, one cannot exhaust all perspectives. Thus, again, one needs to accept that, while one can broaden one's depth of perspective and therefore one's depth of 'knowledge', one can never know anything from every angle, neutrally and objectively. One must learn that one cannot 'know' in this way.

In addition, this point could also be invoking Nietzsche's suggestion that we should not put too much weight on our conscious conceptual/linguistic thoughts about the world, as this route too has its limitations, and we must also utilise other means to draw out our truths, such as through feelings, senses, and willing. Therefore, one must give up the idea that one can ever completely 'know' something in a kind of conscious, rational, objective sense.[73]

The need to balance 'knowing' with 'not knowing' could also refer to his repudiation of seeking truth at any price. For Nietzsche suggests that the way we seek truth (for instance, if we seek it unconditionally) may not just be unrealistic and actually serve to distort our perspective of something,[74] but it might also be life-denying. Therefore, in this way, ideally one also needs to balance 'knowing' with 'not knowing'.

3.1 'Not knowing' to promote the process to becoming

When we think of the need to 'not know' in the context of art and the artistic process, which seems relevant here (as Nietzsche is referring to the higher types as 'artists'), in my view, this also calls to mind a crucial element in any act of creativity. One needs the element of 'not knowing' in a creative

[72] Also see *TI*, 'When the True World Finally Became a Fable'.
[73] This idea perhaps also alludes to Nietzsche's claim that, due to our cognitive limitations, we are incapable of grasping the complexity, fluidity, and interconnectedness of reality. Therefore, we must try not to 'know' in this sense, too.
[74] This could happen, for example, due to our over emotional reliance on truth. For example, in the 'Preface' to *BGE*, Nietzsche illustrates this by comparing it to 'winning a woman', observing how you cannot desire truth too much or it may diminish your chances of attaining it.

act insofar as one cannot be able to consciously know or explain the rules of the process; because if one could, this would make it a purely mechanical act, and it would no longer be creative (e.g. Briskman 2009,35).

We can also see this idea reflected in certain passages in which Nietzsche appears to be providing higher individuals with guidance from his own experience. For he suggests that the path to self-formation (which reveals some of one's own truths or 'necessities' over time[75]) can be paralleled with an artist's creative process since *one cannot and must not consciously know* what one is, so as to enable one 'to become what one is'.

> *'To become what one is,* ***one must not have the faintest notion what one is.*** *...The whole surface of consciousness—consciousness is a surface —must be kept clear of all great imperatives. Beware even of every great word, every great pose! ... Meanwhile, the organizing "idea" that is destined to rule keeps growing deep down—it begins to command; slowly it leads us back from side roads and wrong roads; it prepares single qualities and fitnesses that will one day prove to be indispensable as means toward a whole—one by one, it trains all subservient capacities before giving any hint of the dominant task, "goal," "aim," or "meaning."' (EH* II, 9)

Ridley (2007b) goes on to suggest that the path to 'becoming' is similar to the artistic process in that, while it is lawless to the extent that one cannot know what one is, it is also not a wholly lawless act, for it is driven by one's own underlying laws (for example, the 'organising "idea" that is destined to rule'). This is reflected in the following words of Nietzsche:

> *'Every artist knows how far from any feeling of letting himself go his most "natural" state is - the free ordering, placing . . . giving form in the moment of "inspiration" - and how strictly and subtly he obeys thousandfold laws precisely then, laws that precisely on account of their hardness and determination defy all formulation through concepts.' (BGE(2) 188)*

Therefore, although one's necessities are underlying laws (and therefore informulable, non-conceptual and unknowable to the individual prior to the act), one can potentially discover their nature as they are revealed as one proceeds. This is because we can intuitively feel whether our actions are right in the moment (that is, when they meet these underlying rules), similar to an artistic process (ibid, 213f). As Ridley (2005, xv) observes: 'It is not surprising that Nietzsche should link this process to art and creativity. Artistry is law-like, in the sense that it is possible to go wrong, to make mistakes. Yet the laws against which these mistakes offend often declare themselves only in the moment at which they are breached, indeed in the breaching of them. And this is why getting something right *feels* like – is – getting what one was after all along, even when one could not have said in advance precisely what that

[75] I.e. the nature of our determined traits, our second nature, and our circumstances.

was. In this way, successful artistry is also a form of self-discovery – it is the discovery, in the lawfulness of one's actions, of the innermost character of one's intentions.'

Thus, seemingly, these 'necessities' or 'laws', which underlie our real intentions or willing, can be regarded 'as conditions of effective action, rather than as impediments to it', because they in fact stand for what we would truly 'will' if we were following our own underlying laws (ibid, xiii). The idea that our underlying laws are in fact enablers and 'integral to the possibility of freedom' (ibid) or agency ('rather than as limits upon it') also fits with Nietzsche's view in the following quote:

> *'one should recall the compulsion under which every language so far has achieved strength and freedom - the metrical compulsion of rhyme and rhythm. How much trouble the poets and orators ... have taken ... "submitting abjectly to capricious laws", as anarchists say, feeling "free" ... But the curious fact is that all there is or has been on earth of freedom, subtlety ... and masterly sureness, whether in thought itself ... in the arts just as in ethics, has developed only owing to the "tyranny of such capricious laws"; and in all seriousness, the probability is... that this is "nature" and "natural" - and not that laisser aller.*' (*BGE(2)* 188)

It seems, then, in Nietzsche's view, if we are to get a true idea of our agency, we need to recognise that our own laws ('which is to say, in the necessities that constitute our second nature' (Ridley 2005, xiv)) are integral to its possibility. And if we can get closer to meeting them, then we are becoming more successful as agents.

For, '[o]nly someone who acknowledges the rules of language has the capacity - the freedom - to communicate in it. Only someone who acknowledges the laws of chess has the freedom to castle his king,… And so on, for any human practice at all. To resent such "necessities" as a threat to one's "responsibility", to one's "belief in" oneself, to one's "personal right to [one's own] merits at any price" would be, quite simply, to render oneself impotent (*BGE* 21)' (ibid)[76].

According to this reading, one's own underlying laws cannot be known or determined prior to an act as 'independent standards'. But a person can discover them by either meeting or failing to meet them within the moment of an act. To illuminate this point, Ridley (2007b, 215) discusses Beethoven's artistic process whereby, while Beethoven may have had an idea of what he wanted to achieve (for example, to produce a work with a certain style or tone), he only 'realised' what exactly he intended in his work when he finally produced it after lengthy experimentation and divergences. Thus, Ridley (2005, xv) proposes that Nietzsche uses this model of artistic agency to illustrate this ideal kind of 'limit case of agency'. However, he comments that, even though it is not clear whether or how often this kind of agency is 'occupiable', what it does provide is a 'regulative ideal'.

[76] This is also one reason why the values that 'morality' perpetuates, which deny the authority of our own 'values', gets in the way of our 'becoming' (May 1999,178f).

It also enables Nietzsche to provide a 'life-affirming' interpretation of this process in one's life, and to make *all* of one's life affirmable. As Ridley writes: 'In *Ecce Homo*, then, Nietzsche presents his life as a species of artistry, in several senses. First, his life as it is now is one that he can affirm in all of its circumstances; he has learned to treat everything about himself and his world as necessary to his freedom to act and to create himself under his own laws. Second, he has interpreted his history in such a way that everything in it is "for the best", so that his past unfolds like a work of art. And third, he attributes that unfolding to the "artistry" of his "instinct", since much that contributed to its course was not (and perhaps could not have been) consciously chosen. In each of these senses, Nietzsche portrays himself as the poet of his life, and hence as one who has become who he is.' (ibid, xix)

The potency of 'not knowing'

While this picture helps to illuminate how self-formation may be experienced on one level in Nietzsche's view (with 'not knowing' playing a crucial role), there is evidence to suggest that Nietzsche also offers an *active* meaning behind this idea of 'not knowing' in the sense that the act of 'not knowing' can have some kind of influence on one's drive development. For example, I would argue that this notion is supported by the passage from *EH* II, 9, on how to 'become' what one is. Here Nietzsche also seems to be suggesting that, although the causal efficacy of one's conscious thought is extremely minimal, it still has some causal potency because one needs to *hold back* any 'great imperatives' as this may hinder the development of one's 'organizing "idea"', which ideally, in time, 'trains all subservient capacities towards a unified kind of "goal," "aim," or "meaning."' Therefore, by holding oneself back from 'great imperatives', one can somehow promote one's chances of greater development.

Thus, this quote not only demonstrates that, for Nietzsche, a significant part of the process of 'becoming what one is' is not achieved voluntarily, since it is achieved at a more fundamental and largely subconscious level; it also suggests that 'in order to allow a deeper unifying master drive to develop without obstruction', our conscious cognition needs to be held back sometimes because it may actually interfere with the development of 'our organising "idea"' and its ability to integrate our drives (May 2009, 95f).

The idea that conscious thought may potentially have some kind of potency in this way can also be seen in the fact that Nietzsche suggests that Wagner, at certain times, needed to adopt a form of creative passivity, and give in to the battle of his underlying drives, in order to fulfil his creative potential (ibid; *UM* III, 2). Moreover, as Gemes points out (2006, 199): 'Nietzsche sees *ignorance* as something that helps a deeper unifying drive finally reach its full active expression'.

The importance of refraining from too much self-conscious reflection for artistic creativity is also recognised by Nietzsche in other contexts. We can see it, for instance, in his claims about different 'types' of people,[77] who are able to participate in the life-enhancing activity of 'form-creation'. One of these types is the 'artist' (May 1999, 29f) who is able to create 'the great seduction to life' (*WP* 853, II). Nietzsche proposes that an excess of self-conscious reflection for 'artist' types (in particular when they seek propositional truths about themselves and their artwork) can paralyse their creativity, because the ideal artist needs to be 'fluid' in 'spirit' and detached from propositional truth-seeking in order to be creative (May 1999, 101f).[78]

We can also see the importance of un-reflection in Nietzsche's comment that it is 'almost the norm among fertile artists'. For, in his view, 'the whole world of Greek art' 'never knew what it did' (*GS* 369).

Consequently, it seems that, for Nietzsche, in some instances, while ideally individuals must seek certain 'truths' about oneself, self-ignorance is also a necessary condition for some individuals to develop.[79] Along these lines, May (2009, 92) proposes that: 'premature attempts to discover and understand it would arrest the development of two crucial preparatory phases: first, the innocent, unimpeded experience that comes from forgetting, misunderstanding, and focusing oneself; and, second, the development of "single qualities and fitnesses" free from the straightjacket of overall goals or meanings (*EH* II, 9).'

However, Nietzsche also suggests that when one reaches a certain 'high point' in one's life (*GS* 277), one can then begin to realise, and thus affirm, one's own values with fervour.[80] Therefore, the rare capable few need to embrace a kind of 'not knowing' (in the sense of premature, self-conscious reflection which may arrest their own development or 'becoming')[81] with 'knowing' (and the affirmation of one's own highest values) at the right time.

From this, one could argue that Nietzsche suggests that an ideal individual can play an extremely limited artistic role on their road to 'becoming' by embracing 'knowing' with 'not knowing' about themselves in this way. For this is supported if we consider again how it seems self-formation can potentially be promoted, to a minimal degree, by the kinds of life-affirming values and drives that we embrace in conscious thought. For, if a person 'holds back' the wrong kind of values or 'great imperatives', and

[77] This type does not directly relate to the higher 'artistic' individual that we are discussing here. Furthermore, they can be regarded as traits that can 'coexist within one individual' (May 1999,101).
[78] For example, May (1999,31) notes the 'artist' type must engage in un-reflectiveness (in the sense of 'propositional formulations') in 'three distinct areas': the '"inner" nature and character of the… artist himself, including the wellsprings of his creativity; the overall (ethical) value of his work; and perhaps "external" reality in general' (see also May 1999,160).
[79] Thus, Nietzsche advocates self-ignorance in some contexts and not others (Gemes 2006,199).
[80] This fits in with Nietzsche's story of overcoming where one needs to affirm one's values before one can then overcome them in the ongoing cycle of 'becoming' (May 1999,107f). This also reflects the notion discussed earlier, namely, that complex ethical understanding only surfaces consciously when earlier preparatory subconscious stages have occurred and been consolidated.
[81] Therefore, in this case it is the act of seeking self-knowledge at the wrong time that has negative effects (May 1999,192).

thus engages in 'not knowing' at the right time (by refraining from excessive self-conscious reflection), they could also prevent their conscious thought from hindering this process.[82]

I would suggest that this idea also effectively serves to remind us that, in Nietzsche's view, consciousness is flawed since it is the 'weakest and most fallible organ' (*GM* II, 16). Instead, then, we should focus *more* on 'doing' and 'living' to the full, and gaining experience via a *holistic*, artistic, exploratory process to increase our chances of self-insight and self-formation.

[82] For, if we consider how conscious thought via 'interpretations' can have a limited effect on 'redirecting' one's affects as a kind of limited motivational weighting (Katsafanas 2012, 15), one can see why Nietzsche may have suggested that the act of self-conscious reflection at the wrong time could also impede one's drive development.

Section 4 Building a fuller picture – a normative model

If we accept the above readings as a cumulative argument, I contend that the proposal I am putting forward has gained substantial weight, insofar as Nietzsche seems to encourage his fellow higher 'artistic' individuals to navigate their life by following a normative model based on the artistic process. Additionally, this is supported by the fact that in certain passages (e.g. *GS*(2) Preface, 4),[83] Nietzsche directly refers to himself and his elite ingroup as 'artists', and he seems to be saying: this is what 'we' (in reference to his ingroup) *should* be doing and feeling.

(It is important to stress, however, that there are passages which seem in direct contrast to this. For example, we can see this when Nietzsche clearly distances himself from 'artists' because of the fact that they engage in a kind of falsification of life (e.g. *BGE* 59). Nevertheless, I propose that, in these instances, he is referring to 'artists' in a different sense. For example, in *BGE* 59, it could be argued that he is repudiating certain 'artists' for the kind of art they produce, for the fact that it is overly based on the 'adoration of "pure forms"'. For, this may mean that he is renouncing them because, in his view, their art falsifies life, unlike life-affirming artworks which do not take 'refuge' in 'form'[84] but embrace life in its complexity and uncertainty.)

In the context of the passage in *GS*(2) Preface 4, I propose that Nietzsche is aligning himself and his ingroup with 'artists' because they have adopted a certain ideal kind of *artistic* process. (However, in light of his definition of selfhood, it seems an individual cannot participate in this process via a traditional, 'metaphysical' kind of free will, but only if they are able to by means of a sufficient kind of holistic self-alignment.)

So, if we accept the possibility that his ingroup can 'engage' in this process in such a way, this reading also explains why he claims that they need to have learnt two crucial things: A) '*cheerfulness*' and B) the ability '*not to know*'. For I suggest that Nietzsche is referring to two kinds of crucial elements that are required in successful artistry, which Hockney refers to as A) '*craft*' and B) '*poetry*'.[85] For it appears that these two elements effectively parallel the two contrasting aspects of 'cheerfulness' and 'not knowing', and the presence of active and passive elements.

For example, craft and 'cheerfulness' both stand as a kind of active practice of training, self-cultivation or hard work, which is needed prior to creating a successful artwork, and which can also be likened to

[83] While it is unlikely that Nietzsche would offer a specific 'take-home message' (Stern 2009, 105) as what is suitable for one person is not suitable for another, in this case, however, it is plausible that he is providing a form of guidance since he appears to be addressing a select ingroup, who he regards as similar to himself.
[84] Nietzsche warns of those who 'take refuge in the beauty of form' (*WTP* III,852).
[85] E.g. BBC News 2012.

Kant's notion of an artist of genius who must 'prepare the ground' by way of 'academic training and the cultivation of good taste'.[86]

The second element of poetry or 'not knowing' could refer to the necessary creative *passive* element in the process, meaning that the artist cannot consciously track their creative steps, but (by 'preparing the ground') it will emerge, produced from their own underlying natural inner laws and talents. Thus, this 'is the essential feature of all monologue art – it is based on forgetting; it is the *music* of forgetting' (*GS* 367). Yet, this cannot involve mere apathy; that is to say, an 'artist' cannot just wait and let the work unravel.

Ridley (2013, 15) also supports the idea that Nietzsche recognised these elements within the 'artistic' process of self-formation, which he suggests rest 'upon an implicit distinction between two sorts of laws: those that can be formulated "through concepts" and those that can't be'. In this way, Nietzsche is 'following Kant' because, in a similar way, both suggest that, to be successful, an 'artist' must learn and practice certain laws (e.g. a musician must learn the rules of harmony). However, 'mere deployment of these will never take one further than competence. To go further requires what Kant calls "genius" … And to have such an ability is, as Kant puts it, to be one *through whom* "nature gives the rule to art" – such rules being neither stateable in advance, nor (hence) teachable' (ibid). In a similar way, Nietzsche requires a person with greater self-formation to be able to balance both conscious work and deliberation with the 'secret work and artistry of [his] instinct'. Therefore, this is why Nietzsche suggests that, 'as artists', they should have learnt these two *crucial, contrasting abilities*.

However, I contend that, if we bring various strands from this discussion together, we must also highlight further characteristics of this process and build a fuller picture of how Nietzsche's 'artistic' higher individuals should 'navigate' their lives. For, in Nietzsche's view, Goethe's ability to 'discipline himself to wholeness' not only came from his ongoing, wholly-embodied, multi-layered, artistic exploration of life (as I discussed earlier); it also emerged because he was able to successfully balance his 'wealth' of passions with his strength in *self-restraint*. Thus, like an artist he realised it was not a simple matter of 'letting himself go' (*BGE* 188), but also entailed being mindful of his underlying laws and what *felt* right. As such, he not only had *self-insight* but also the *ability to 'keep himself in check'* in light of this insight (*TI* IX, 49).

Furthermore, as discussed in section 3, Nietzsche's ideal artist types need to know when to restrain themselves from too much self-conscious reflection, until they reach a 'higher' stage and become capable of recognising what they need and want to legislate[87]. Thus, Nietzsche's higher 'artistic'

[86] Haworth 2014, 334.
[87] Gardner 2009.

individuals, in a similar way to 'ordinary' artists, seem at times to be able to rely on a kind of *evaluative insight* which enables them, with practice, to develop over time, via a kind of *trial-and-error process*.

Consequently, although the process to self-formation is likely to proceed incrementally over a 'lived life'[88], in my view Ridley's Beethoven analogy does not go far enough to illustrate how Nietzsche's path to 'becoming' might be experienced. For it seems that an individual would not only begin to 'realise' what they intended (i.e. their underlying laws) via carrying out the process successfully over time and 'preparing the ground' with passionate affirmation, hard work, and self-discipline. They would also need somehow to *utilise* their discoveries along the way so that they can complement each step[89] as they go along.

In this way, there is a kind of two-way process between the 'artwork' and the 'artist', which is often reflected in artists' accounts of the creative process. Hockney, for example, suggests that when he is working on a piece, the process will often involve him 'interacting' with the work as he goes along, and responding to it as it develops.[90]

Thus, this ideal process requires two essential elements that also feature within the artistic process:

- Firstly, it must be **non-mechanical**, i.e. not bound by rules.[91]
- Secondly, it must also be **agential and purposeful**, and therefore 'non-random', because it is a 'property of an agent' (Gaut 2010, 1040).

So, Nietzsche's process towards 'becoming' is similar to an artistic process in that it brings together these two apparently contrasting elements. It is carried out in a kind of 'blind' state, since one cannot simply access one's own underlying laws/motivations, and yet it remains agential and purposeful[92] because it involves 'navigating' one's life as an artist by exploring one's passions and striving to follow one's own path. Like a creative process, then, it allows for a very minimal 'soft control', 'allowing ends to be revised' along the way[93] – where the individual may use some 'evaluative insight' to guide this kind of trial-and-error process, which, in the long run, if successful, may lead to greater mastery.

[88] May 1999,110.
[89] Although this needs to be done at the right time.
[90] Sky Arts 2018. See also *A Bigger Splash* (1973).
[91] Briskman 2009,35.
[92] Blackburn (2014,149) argues that this means it is difficult to make sense of creativity as something 'we do as agents'. For 'creation ex nihilo… is a principled problem' because it 'offers only a void into which things might float, but no basis for reflection, intelligence, design, or control'.
[93] For example, some suggest that creativity happens via a process of variation and selection, consisting in a 'blind' stage where ideas are produced, then a selection stage where the most promising ideas are considered further (Gaut 2010,1037). Consequently, Briskman (2009,40) suggests that this type of 'soft' control allows ends to be altered along the way. (See also Gaut 2010,1041; Gaut 2003, Introduction).

Consequently even though Nietzsche was not suggesting that one could have the same level of agency as an artist creating an artwork, it seems persuasive to suggest that he considered the artistic process to be an effective normative model for certain individuals to live by in order to promote life-formation.

Conclusion

Thus, while Nietzsche valorises art for its 'glorifying' qualities and its ability to assist in the road towards life-affirmation (which for some may involve greater levels of falsification), I hope this discussion has brought to light the fact that he has a far more nuanced approach to art, extending far beyond the falsification thesis:

- not only because, for example, aesthetic transfiguration can enable certain individuals to reconceptualise the framework of their experience of life so that they re-orientate their affects and therefore embrace life *honestly* in a life-affirming manner;
- but, also, because art can serve as a normative ethical process for certain higher types to live by which can promote their self-formation.

In view of this, it is evident that Nietzsche also values art for its process, and how it provides an effective model for an ideal few, highlighting how they may promote their own self-formation, and how they need to recognise the lack of the 'primacy' of consciousness in this process[94].

For, his ideal individual must not view themselves as a wholly-in-control conscious 'helmsman' of their life; instead, they should view themselves more like an 'artist', recognising the role that their subconscious plays and that consciousness can sometimes impede their development. What is more, they must acknowledge that, like an artistic process, their life must be one of trial-and-error, goal-orientated and yet 'blind', as it needs to be 'lived' out via bold experimentation and interaction with their life, to promote their chances of self-formation.

As such, this reading also illustrates how the artistic process, for Nietzsche, is linked to the 'ethical' realm more than is often recognised i.e. it is not simply aesthetic in the sense of being pleasing.

Moreover, I contend that the artistic analogy is extremely useful in that we immediately intuitively understand how the process to Nietzschean self-formation also requires the balancing of tensions (appropriate to the context). For example, it involves balancing certain opposites such as: artificial style-giving and embracing truth; conscious self-reflection and active un-reflection; conceptual thought combined with sense-experience and desires; the management of inner conflict and external pressures; and passion and self-restraint.

Additionally, I suggest that, while I have drawn together numerous strands from Nietzsche's text, and thus this reading is contentious, it is compelling to accept it. This is because it helps to resolve certain tensions in Nietzsche's broader philosophy, such as why he calls on us to engage *consciously* in a 'revaluation of values', while deeming most conscious thought as epiphenomenal. For this tension is

resolved if we interpret him as suggesting that we need to engage in it consciously in the way an artist engages in their work: 'blindly' and yet 'purposefully'.

The artistic process towards self-formation, which provides an embodied, organic story of personal development, also effectively encapsulates how Nietzschean freedom is experienced as 'free', i.e. not in the sense of metaphysical 'free will', but rather as in the freedom that a great pianist or artist achieves when they make something look free and beautiful in a moment of creativity, even though it has taken an incredible amount of hard work, passion, and discipline to reach such a point.

Furthermore, the artistic analogy illustrates how life-flourishing is not essentially a settled, comfortable state, but is instead the kind of heightened feeling of 'life' that one feels when struggling for one's own freedom, feeling 'maximally alive'[95] – as, in art, to be successful, one has to push things forward constantly.

Finally, this wholly embodied account adds a wonderful extra dimension to Nietzsche's suggestion that one can use art to 'attain satisfaction' with oneself (*GS* 290). For art can help one to attain satisfaction with oneself in a kind of superficial way, so that one finds oneself pleasing – and this can come from certain creative artistic techniques such as '"giv[ing] style" to one's character' (ibid). However, if art can also, on rare occasions, help an individual to achieve greater self-alignment via a transfigurative process over time, they may also attain the kind of *full-bodied satisfaction* which comes from the kind of pleasure you experience when you 'feel' you are functioning well, as a wholly-unified organism with greater levels of self-control and Nietzschean 'freedom'.

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